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HISTORY
OF
THE HOLY BIBLE.

HISTORY

THE HOLY BIBLE

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A
HISTORY
OF
THE HOLY BIBLE,

FROM THE
Beginning of the World to the Establishment of Christianity;

WITH
ANSWERS TO INFIDEL OBJECTIONS, DISSERTATIONS ON THE MOST REMARKABLE PASSAGES
AND MOST IMPORTANT DOCTRINES,

AND
A CONNECTION OF THE PROFANE WITH THE SACRED WRITINGS.

BY THE REV. THOMAS STACKHOUSE, A. M.

LATE VICAR OF BEENHAM IN BERKSHIRE.

THE WHOLE CORRECTED AND IMPROVED,

AND

DEDICATED, BY PERMISSION, TO

His Grace the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury,

BY

THE RIGHT REV. GEORGE GLEIG, LL.D. F.R.S.E. F.S.S.A.

ONE OF THE BISHOPS OF THE SCOTCH EPISCOPAL CHURCH.

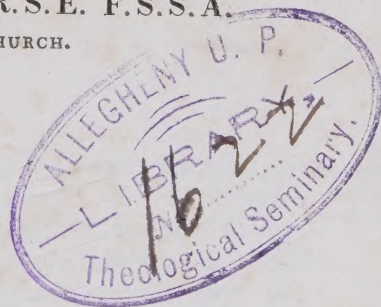
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1817.



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Containing the whole of the Holy Scriptures, both in the
original Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, with the
English translation, and the Vulgate.

By the Rev. John Rogers, M.A. of the University of
Oxford, and of the Society of the Holy Sepulchre.

A CORRECTION OF THE ABOVE, WITH THE ENGLISH
TRANSLATION, AND THE VULGATE.

BY THE REV. JOHN ROGERS, M.A.

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THE SECOND EDITION, WITH CORRECTIONS.

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THE HISTORY

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BIBLE.

BOOK V.

CONTAINING AN ACCOUNT OF THINGS FROM THE ISRAELITES ENTRANCE INTO THE LAND OF CANAAN TO THE BUILDING OF SOLOMON'S TEMPLE, IN ALL 447 YEARS,—ACCORDING TO DR HALES 581 YEARS.

CHAPTER I.

FROM THEIR ENTRANCE TO THE DEATH OF JOSHUA.

THE HISTORY.

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UPON the death of Moses, Joshua, who had a long while been his prime minister, by the command of God, undertook the conduct of the children of Israel; and, as it was a very momentous charge, he was not a little anxious how he should be enabled to execute it. He saw himself indeed at the head of six hundred thousand fighting men; but then the nations which he was to subdue were a warlike and gigantic people, that had already taken the alarm, and therefore made early preparations for a defence; had fortified their cities, and confederated their forces against him. And while he was musing on these things, to give him encouragement in his undertaking, † God was pleased to

From Josh. i.
to the end.

† It is the opinion of most interpreters, that, whenever God is said to speak to Moses, to Joshua, or any other pious man in the Old Testament, he does not do it by himself but by an angel only. This perhaps might be his most common way of communicating himself; but there want not several instances in Scrip-

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assure him that he would not fail to protect and assist him in it, in the same manner as he had done his predecessor Moses; and provided he took care to obey his laws, as Moses had done, make the whole land of Canaan a cheap and easy conquest to him: And therefore, without perplexing his mind any farther, he ordered him immediately to set about the work.

* The city of Jericho was just opposite to the place where he was to ^{**} pass the river Jordan; and, as it was the first that he intended to attack, he thought it advisable to send two spies thither to take a view of the situation, and strength, and avenues of the place. As soon as the spies were gone, he bade the officers go through the camp, and give the people notice, that within three days they were to pass the Jordan in or-

ture, where God himself, or (as others will have it) the eternal Logos, converses with his servants. And this he may do, either by a mental locution, wherein he objects to their minds the express idea of what such a number of words would convey; or by a corporal locution, when he assumes an apparent body and speech, in the same manner that men speak. But in the place before us (whether it were an angel or God himself) he seems to have spoken to Joshau out of the Sanctuary, from whence he had spoken to him a little before Moses's death, and gave him encouragement to perform strenuously what he is now putting upon him. Deut. xxxi. 14. 23.

* Jericho was a city of Canaan, which afterwards fell to the lot of the tribe of Benjamin, about seven leagues distant from Jerusalem, and two from Jordan. Moses calls it likewise the city of palm-trees, Deut. xxxiv. 3. because there were great numbers of them in the plains of Jericho; and not only of palm-trees, but, as Josephus tells us, (Antiq. lib. iv. c. 5.) balsam-trees likewise, which produced the precious liquor in such high esteem among the ancients. The plain of Jericho was watered with a rivulet, which was formerly salt and bitter, but was afterwards sweetened by the prophet Elisha, 2 Kings ii. 21, 22. whereupon the adjacent country, which was watered by it, became not only one of the most agreeable, but most fertile spots in all that country. As to the city itself, after it was destroyed by Joshua, it was, in the days of Ahab king of Israel, rebuilt by Hiel the Bethelite, 1 Kings xvi. 34. and, in the times of the last kings of Judea, yielded to none except Jerusalem. For it was adorned with a royal palace wherein Herod the Great died; with an *hippodromus*, or place where the Jewish nobility learned to ride the great-horse and other arts of chivalry; with an amphitheatre and other magnificent buildings; but, during the siege of Jerusalem, the treachery of its inhabitants provoked the Romans to destroy it. After the siege was over there was another city built, but not upon the same place where the two former stood; for the ruins of them are seen to this day. Of what account and bigness it was we have no certain information; but some later travellers inform us, that at present it is no more than a poor nasty village of the Arabs. Wells's Geography of the Old and New Testament, and Maundrell's Journey from Aleppo.

** Jordan is supposed to derive its name from the Hebrew word *Jor*, which signifies a *spring*, and *Dan*, which is a small town, and not far from the fountain-

head of this river. It is certainly a river of very great note in holy writ, and of it the Jewish historian gives us the following account: "The head of this river has been thought to be Panion; but, in truth, it passes hither under ground, and the source of it is Phiala, an hundred and twenty furlongs from Cæsarea Philippi, a little on the right hand, and not much out of the way to Trachonis.—From the cave of Panion it crosses the bogs and fens of the lake Semechon, and, after a course of an hundred and twenty furlongs further, passes under the city of Julias, (or Bethsaida), and so over the lake Gennesareth or Tiberias, and then, running a long way through a wilderness or desert, it empties itself into the lake Asphaltites or the Dead Sea." Now, since the cave Panion lies at the foot of Mount Lebanon, and the lake Asphaltites reaches to the very extremity of the south of Judea, the river Jordan must extend its course quite from the northern to the southern boundary of the holy land. But the largeness of this river is far from being equal to its extent. It may be said indeed to have two banks, whereof the first and outermost is that to which the river does, or at least anciently did, overflow at some seasons of the year; but at present (whether the rapidity of the current has worn its channel deeper, or its waters are directed some other way) so it is, that it seems to have forgot its ancient greatness: For "we (says Mr Maundrell) could discern no sign or probability of such overflowing, though we were there on the 30th of March, which is the proper time for its inundations. Nay, so far was the river from overflowing, that it ran at least two yards below the brink of its channel. After you have descended the outermost bank (continues he) you go about a furlong upon the level strand, before you come to the immediate bank of the river, which is so beset with bushes and trees, such as tamarisks, willows, oleanders, &c. that you can see no water until you have made your way through them. In this cover of the banks, lions and other wild creatures are said to hide themselves in summer, but upon the inundation of the river they are forced to dislodge." To which the prophet seems to allude in these words, "He shall come up like a lion from the swelling of Jordan," Jer. xlix. 19. The river, in short, seems much diminished from its ancient grandeur; for it is not above twenty yards in breadth, though deep and muddy, and a little too rapid to swim over. Wells and Maundrell, *ibid*.

der to take possession of the promised land, and were therefore † to provide themselves with victuals for their march. * The spies who were sent upon this hazardous expedition got safe into the city, and took up their lodgings in a public-house, that was kept by a widow-woman whose name was Rahab. But they had not been long there before intelligence was brought to the king, so that he ordered the gates to be shut and search to be made for the men: But their hostess, having had some notice of it, hid them under some stalks of flax which lay drying *² upon the roof of her house, and, when the king's officers came, she told them, "That there had indeed been two strangers there, who had made a short stay at her house, but that a little before sun-set they went away, but might easily be over-taken, because they had not been long gone:" Whereupon they sent out messengers after them, as far as the fords of Jordan, but in vain. Having thus eluded the king's officers, Rahab goes up to the spies, and tells them,— "That she was very confident their God (who was the only true God both in heaven and earth) had delivered that country into their hands; that the actions which he had done for them, in making all opposition fall before them, had struck a panic fear into all its inhabitants; and that therefore, as she was confident that this would be the event, and had, in this instance, shewn them uncommon kindness, her only request was, that when they came against the city they would in return spare her's and her family's lives; for which she desired of them some assurance." An offer so generous and so unexpected, joined with so liberal a confession, could not but engage the two spies to a compliance with what she requested; and therefore they promised, and solemnly swore to her, that, whenever they became masters of the city, not only she and her family, but every one else that was found in her house, should be exempted from the common ruin.

The gates were so closely shut and guarded, that there was no possibility of making their escape that way; but Rahab's house being happily situated upon the city-wall, as soon as it was conveniently dark, she first charged them to make to the neighbouring mountains, where they might keep themselves concealed until the messengers were returned,

† The Israelites usual food, while they sojourned in the wilderness, was manna; but as they approached the promised land, where they might have provision in an ordinary way, that miraculous bread did perhaps gradually decrease; and, in the space of a few days after this, was totally withdrawn. They were now in the countries of Sihon and Og, which they had lately conquered, and the victuals, which they were commanded to provide themselves with, were such as their new conquest afforded: For being after three days (Josh. iii. 1.) to remove very early in the morning, they might not perhaps have had time to gather a sufficient quantity of manna, and to bake it, before they were obliged to march. *Patrick's Commentary.*

* The eastern writers tell us, that these spies (whom they make to be Caleb and Phineas) were valiant and religious men, and in the prime of their youth; that, to pass unobserved, they changed their habits, as if they had come from a distant country, and, if any one asked them any questions, their reply was to this effect: "We are people from the East, and our companions have heard of this powerful people, who were forty years in the wilderness without either guide or provision; and it was reported to us, that they had a God whom they called the King of heaven and earth, and who (as they say) hath given them both your and our country. Our principals have therefore sent us to find out the truth hereof, and to report it to them.—We have likewise heard

of their captain, whom they call Joshua the son of Nun, who put the Amalekites to flight, who destroyed Sihon and Og, the kings of Midian and Moab. Woe therefore be to us, and you, and all that flee to us for shelter! They are a people who pity none, leave none alive, drive all out of their country, and make peace with none. We are all accounted by them infidels, profane, proud, and rebellious. Whoever of us or you, therefore, that intend to take care of themselves, let them take their families and be gone, lest they repent of their stay when it is too late." By this means they imposed upon the people; and (as Josephus informs us) went whither they would, and saw whatever they had a mind to, without any stop or question. They took a view of the walls, the gates, the ramparts, and passed the whole day for men of curiosity only, without any design. So that if any credit may be given to this account, it was but just that they, who thus imposed upon the Canaanites, should, in the same manner, be imposed upon by the Gibeonites. *Chronicon Samaritanum Arabicè Scriptum*, p. 65. and *Josephus's Antiq. lib. v. c. 1.*

*² The roofs of houses were then very flat, and, having probably battlements round them to secure people from falling off, (as the manner of building was afterwards among the Jews, Deut. xxii. 8.) were made use of for places to walk, or at any time to lay any kind of goods upon.

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and then let them down by a silken cord from one of her windows which faced the country. But before they parted, they agreed that this same cord, hung out at her window, should be the token between them; and therefore they desired, that whoever she was minded to save, might, when their army approached the city, be kept within doors. The spies having thus luckily escaped, took Rahab's advice, and concealed themselves in the mountains, until those who were sent out to pursue them were returned to the city, and then they made the best of their way to the camp, where they informed Joshua of their whole adventure, and, withal, gave him to understand, that the general consternation which they found the people in, was to them a sure omen, that God Almighty intended to crown their armies with success.

Pleased with this news, Joshua gave orders for the army to decamp; but before he did that, he reminded the tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh, of the promise they had made Moses to assist their brethren in the conquest of Canaan; † which they readily consented to do; and not only in that, but in every thing else he commanded them to do, promised to obey him with the same chearfulness that they had done Moses: So that forty thousand of them decamped with him, and fell down to the banks of the Jordan.

It was now in the time of the barley-harvest, (which in these hot countries falls early in the spring) when, by reason of hasty rain, and the melting of the snow upon Mount Lebanon, the river is generally full of water, and sometimes overflows its banks: And as soon as the army was come within a small distance of the place where it was intended they should cross, Joshua sent and communicated to every tribe the order that was to be observed in this solemn march. The priests, bearing the ark, were to begin the procession; each tribe, in the order in which they used to march, were to follow. When the priests were got into the middle of the channel, there they were to stand still, until the whole multitude was got safe to the other shore; and that this wonderful passage might be more regarded, they were all enjoined to sanctify themselves, by washing their clothes, avoiding all impurities, and abstaining from matrimonial intercourse the night before.

Before they crossed the river, Joshua, by God's direction, appointed twelve men, out of every tribe one, to chuse twelve stones (according to the number of their tribes) in the midst of the channel, where the priests, with the ark, were ordered to stand, and †² there to set them up, (that they might be seen from each side of the river, when the waters were abated) as a monument of this great miracle; and to bring twelve more ashore with them for the like purpose.

With these orders and instructions the army set forward. The priests with the ark led the van; and as soon as they touched the river with their feet, the stream divided. The waters above went back, and rose up on heaps as far as the city †³ Adam; whilst those that were below, continuing their course towards the Dead Sea, opened a passage of above 16 or 18 miles for the Israelites to cross over; and all the time that they were

† The two tribes and an half had the countries which had been lately conquered, and were now given to them in possession, to preserve against the attempts of the nations from whom they had taken them, and can hardly be supposed to go, one and all, along with their brethren to the conquest of their countries, which lay on the other side of the river Jordan. In the last muster of the army, they consisted of above an hundred thousand able soldiers; and we can hardly suppose, that, at this time, their number was decreased. The forty thousand that went over Jordan, were but a part of them, and the rest were left behind to guard their new conquest against the vanquished nations, that had abundant reason to become their enemies.

Saurin, vol. iii. Dissertation i.

†² It has been a custom in all nations to erect monuments of stone, in order to preserve the memory of covenants, victories, and other great transactions; and though there was no inscription upon these stones, yet the number of them, and the place where they lay (which was not at all stony) was sufficient to signify some memorable thing, which posterity would not fail to hand down from one generation to another. *Patrick's Commentary on Joshua iv. 7.*

†³ Adam or Adom, is a place situate on the banks of the river Jordan, towards the south of the sea of Cinnereth, or the sea of Galilee. *Wells's Geography of the Old Testament.*

thus crossing, the priests with the ark stood in the middle of the channel, till every thing was done that Joshua commanded; and then, upon their coming out of it, the river returned to its wonted course. From Josh. i. to the end.

By this miraculous passage, Joshua, having gained the plains of Jericho, encamped in a † place which was afterwards called Gilgal; and while the whole country lay under a great terror and consternation, God commanded †² the rite of circumcision, which for the space of almost forty years had been intermitted, to be renewed, that the people might be qualified to partake of the ensuing passover. This was the third time of their celebrating that festival: The first was at their departure out of Egypt; the second at their erection of the tabernacle at the foot of Mount Sinai; and now, that they were arrived in a country, wherein there was a sufficient provision of corn for unleavened

† Gilgal, the place where the Israelites encamped for some time, after their passage over the river Jordan, was so called, because here the rite of circumcision, which had long been disused, was renewed: Whereupon “the Lord said unto Joshua, this day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt (i. e. uncircumcision) from off you, wherefore the name of the place is called Gilgal (i. e. rolling) unto this day.” Josh. v. 9. From this expression the place received its name; and if we look into its situation, we shall find, that as the Israelites passed over Jordan right against Jericho, Josh. iii. 16. and encamped in Gilgal, in the east border of Jericho, it is plain, that Gilgal must be situated between Jordan and Jericho; and therefore, since Josephus tells us, that Jericho was sixty furlongs distant from Jordan, and the camp of Gilgal was fifty furlongs from the same river; it hence follows, that Gilgal was ten furlongs (i. e. about a mile and a quarter) from Jericho eastward. But as some learned men have observed, that five, of the furlongs used by Josephus make up an Italian mile, so the distance between Gilgal and Jericho will be just two miles; which exactly agrees with the testimony of St Jerom, who makes it two miles distant from Jericho, and a place held in great veneration by the inhabitants of the country in his days. *Wells's Geography*, vol. ii. c. iv.

†² The command which God gives Joshua concerning the rite of circumcision, is this—“Make thee sharp knives, and circumcise the children of Israel the second time.” Josh. v. 2. And, after the rite was performed, God said, “This day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you,” ver. 9. Both of which passages have given no small trouble to commentators. The sharp knives are allowed to be (what our marginal notes call them) knives of flint, which stones could not but be plentiful in the mountains of Arabia, and, when made very sharp, were the knives commonly made use of in the eastern countries: But St Jerom himself (as great an Hebraist as he was) could not find out what was this circumcision, which was to pass upon the Israelites the second time. Some of the Jews, from these words of Jeremiah, “I will punish the circumcised that has a foreskin.” Chap. ix. 25. have undertaken to prove, that it was possible to bring the foreskin again by art, which the Israelites had done, during their abode in the wilderness, and for this reason were ordered to be circumcised afresh: and those Christians who have em-

braced this notion, pretend to support it by the words of St Paul, “If any man is called, being circumcised, *μη ἐπισυνάβῃ*, let him not get a foreskin again,” or, as we render it, “let him not become uncircumcised.” But whether the recovery of a prepuce be a thing probable or not, it is certain, that all the difficulty of the words arises from misunderstanding the idiom of the original, and may easily be removed, if they were translated or paraphrased thus,—“Let the ceremony of circumcision, which has been so long discontinued, be renewed, as it was once heretofore.” While the Israelites lived in Egypt, we do not read of any neglect of this rite of circumcision among them; but, while they abode in the wilderness, there are several reasons that might oblige them to omit it, until they arrived in the promised land, when they were to renew the ordinance of the Passover, and, previous to that, were all to be circumcised; because no uncircumcised person, nor any one who had a son or a man servant in his house uncircumcised, was capable of being admitted to it, Exod. xii. 43. 2d, The rolling away the reproach of Egypt, is supposed by some to relate to the reproaches which the Egyptians used to cast upon the Israelites, viz. that the Egyptians, seeing the Israelites wander so long in the wilderness, reproached and flouted them, as if they were brought to be destroyed there, and not conducted into the promised land; from which reproaches God now delivered them, when, by enjoining circumcision, he gave them assurance, that they should shortly enjoy the country, which no uncircumcised person might inherit. Our learned Spencer thinks the reproach of Egypt to be the slavery to which they had long been there subject, but were now fully declared a free people, by receiving a mark of the seed of Abraham, and being made heirs of the promised land. But the most common opinion is, that by the reproach of Egypt is meant nothing else but uncircumcision, with which the Israelites always upbraided other people, and particularly the Egyptians, with whom they had lived so long, and were best acquainted; and, admitting this to be the true (as it is the most unconstrained) sense, this passage is a plain proof, that the Israelites could not learn the rite of circumcision from the Egyptians, (as some pretend) but that the Egyptians, contrary-wise, must have had it from them. *Universal History*, lib. i. c. 7. *Spencer de Leg. Heb.* lib. i. c. 4. *Patrick's Commentary*, and *Shuckford's Connection*, vol. iii. lib. 12.

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bread, God insisted upon the observance of his ordinances: He was minded indeed, that all things now should go on in their regular way; and therefore, for the future, he left them to the provision which this land of plenty afforded them, and ceased to supply them any longer with manna.

Gilgal was much about two miles from Jericho, and therefore Joshua might possibly go out alone to reconnoitre the city, and to think of the properest way of besieging it; when, all on a sudden, there † appeared to him a person clothed in armour, and standing at some distance, with a drawn sword in his hand. Undaunted at this unusual sight, Joshua advances to him, and having demanded of what party he was, the vision replied, that he was for the host of Israel, whose captain and guardian he was; and as Joshua, in humble adoration, was fallen prostrate before him, he ordered him (in the manner he had done Moses at the burning bush) to loose his sandals from off his feet, and then proceeded to instruct him in what form he would have the siege carried on, that the Canaanites might perceive that it was something more than the arm of flesh that fought against them.

The form of the seige was this:—All the army was to march round the city, with seven priests before the ark, having in their hands trumpets made of rams horns, six days successively. On the seventh, after the army had gone round the city seven times, upon signal given, the priests were to blow a long blast with their trumpets, and the people on a sudden set up a loud shout; at which instant the walls of the city should fall so flat to the ground, that they might directly walk into it without any let or obstruction. These orders were put in execution; and accordingly, on the seventh day, the walls fell, and the Israelites entered. They put every one, men, women, and children, nay the very beasts, to the sword, and spared no living creature but Rahab only, and such relations as she had taken under the protection of her roof, according to the stipulation which he had made with her. For Joshua had given the two spies a strict charge before hand, that when the town was going to be sacked, they should repair to her house, and convey every thing safe out that belonged to her; which accordingly they did, and then the whole army fell on, and set fire to the city, and destroyed every thing in it, except the silver and gold, and such vessels of brass and iron as were to be put into the “treasury of the house of the Lord,” as they had done once before (a) in a case of the like nature: and that it might never be rebuilt again, Joshua † denounced a

† Who this person was that appeared to Joshua is not so well agreed among commentators. Some are of opinion, that it was an angel, who, because the Hebrew calls him Gebir, is supposed to be Gabriel; but there are several reasons, in this very account of his apparition, which denote him to be a divine, and not a created being. For, in the first place, besides his assuming the title of “the captain of the host of the Lord,” (an image under which God himself is frequently represented in Scripture) Joshua’s calling him Jehovah, or the Lord, a name which neither Joshua should have given, nor he accepted of, had he been no more than an angel; his falling down and worshipping him, which he durst not have done, (since God alone is to be adored) nor would the other have permitted, but rather have reproved him, as we find one of them did St John, Rev. xxii. 10. are the surest evidence of the divinity of his person. For, when instead of reproving him for doing him too much honour, we find him commanding him to do him more, by requiring him to loose “his shoes from his feet,” insisting upon the highest acknowledgment of a Divine Presence that was used among the eastern na-

tions, we cannot but think ourselves obliged (with a learned rabbin) freely to confess, “that this angel, who suffered himself to be worshipped, and by whose presence the place where he appeared was sanctified, so that Joshua was commanded to put off his shoes; no doubt was the very same whom all the angels of heaven do worship. *Joh. à Coch.* upon the Gemara of the Sanhedrim, vol. iii. dissert. ii.

(a) Numb. xxxi. 22, 23.

† The words of Joshua’s execration are these:—“Cursed be the man before the Lord, that raiseth up and buildeth this city Jericho; he shall lay the foundation thereof in his first-born, and in his youngest son shall he set up the gates of it.” Josh. vi. 26. “This anathema (says Maimonides) was pronounced, that the miracle of the subversion of Jericho might be kept in perpetual memory; for whosoever saw the walls sunk deep into the earth (as he understands it) would clearly discern that this was not the form of a building destroyed by men, but miraculously thrown down by God.” Hiel, however, in the reign of Ahab, either not remembering or not believing this denunciation, was so taken with the beauty of its situation,

prophetic imprecation on the man (viz. that it should occasion the utter ruin of his family) that should attempt it. From Josh. i. to the end.

† Ai was a little city about twelve miles distant from Jericho, and as Joshua knew that it was neither populous nor well-defended, he detached a small body of three thousand men only to go and attack it. But, contrary to their expectation, the inhabitants of the place sallied out upon them, and having slain some few, put the rest to flight, and pursued them as far as their own camp. This defeat (how small soever) struck such a damp upon the people's courage, that * Joshua was forced to have recourse to God, who immediately answered him (by Urim as is supposed) that his commands had been sacrilegiously infringed, and therefore ordered him to have the offender punished with death, and directed him to a method how to discover who he was.

Before the taking of Jericho, (a) Joshua had cautioned the people not to spare any thing that was in it, but to burn and destroy all that came in their way, except silver, and gold, and brass, and iron, which were to be consecrated to the Lord: but notwithstanding his strict charge against reserving any thing that was either devoted to this general destruction, or consecrated to the Lord; a man of the tribe of Judah, whose name was Achan, took some of the rich plunder and concealed it in his tent. To find out the person therefore, Joshua early next morning called all the tribes together before the tabernacle, where, †² by casting the lot first upon the tribes, and so proceeding

that he rebuilt Jericho, and (as the sacred history informs us) "laid the foundation thereof in Abiram, his first-born, and set up the gates thereof in his youngest son Segub, according to the word of the Lord, which he spake by Joshua, the son of Nun." 1 Kings xvi. 34. However, after that Hiel had ventured to rebuild it, no scruple was made of inhabiting it; for it afterwards became famous upon many accounts. Here the prophet sweetened the waters of the spring that supplied it and the neighbouring countries: Here Herod built a sumptuous palace; it was the dwelling place of Zaccheus; and was honoured with the presence of Christ, who vouchsafed likewise to work some miracles here. *Universal History*, lib. 1. c. 7.

† We have this place mentioned in the history of Abraham, who, both before and after his going into Egypt, pitched his tent between Bethel and Ai, or Hai as it was then called; and from both Gen. xii. 8. and Josh. vii. 2. it appears, that this city lay to the east of Bethel, about three leagues from Jericho, and one from Bethel, as Masias informs us; and the reason why Joshua sent so small a detachment against it was,—because the place in itself was neither strong nor large. For, when it was taken, the number of the slain both in it and Bethel, which (as some think) was confederate with it, were "but twelve thousand, both of men and women." Josh. viii. 25. The Providence of God however was very visible in sending so small a party against Ai; for if the flight of three thousand men put the Israelites into such a consternation, as we read Josh. vii. 5, 6. what a condition would they have been in, if all the people had been discomfited, as doubtless it would have happened, while the guilt of Achan's sacrilege remained unpunished? *Wells's Geography*, vol. ii. c. 4.

* The spirits of the army (as Josephus tells us) were so sunk upon this disorder, and cast down into such a desperation of better things to come, that af-

ter they had spent the whole day in fasting, weeping, and mourning, Joshua addressed himself, with a more than ordinary importunity, to Almighty God, in words to this effect: "It is not any temerity, O Lord, or ambition of our own, that has brought us hither to make war upon this people, but a pure deference and respect to the persuasion of thy servant Moses, that has incited us to this undertaking, and not without a warrant of many signs and miracles to convince us that he had reason and authority on his side, when he told us that thou thyself hadst promised us the possession of this country, and to give us victory over all our enemies. But what a change is here all on a sudden, in the disappointment of our hopes, and in the loss of our friends! As if either Moses's prediction had not been of Divine inspiration, or otherwise thy promises and purposes variable. If this be the beginning of a war, we cannot but dread the farther progress of it, for fear that this miscarriage, upon the first experiment, should prove only the earnest of greater evils to come. But, Lord, thou alone, that art able to give us relief, help us, and save us. Vouchsafe unto us comfort and victory; and be graciously pleased to preserve us from the snare of despairing for the future." *Jewish Antiq.* lib. 5. c. 1.

(a) Josh. vi. 18, 19.

†² Some Jewish doctors are of opinion, that in the discovery of the guilty person, there was no use made of lots at all, but that all Israel, being ordered to pass by the high priest, who on this occasion had his pectoral on, in which were the twelve stones with the names of the twelve tribes engraven on them, when the tribe to which the guilty person belonged was called, the stone in which was the name of that tribe changed colour and turned black; and so it did when the family, the household, and the person was called: but this is a mere-fiction. There is much more probability in the opinion of those, who suppose, that at first twelve lots or tickets were put into one urn, on

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from tribe to family, from family to household, and from household to particular persons, the criminal was at last found to be Achan; who, upon Joshua's admonition, confessed the fact, viz. that he had secreted * a royal robe, two hundred shekels of silver, and a large wedge of gold; and when, upon search, the things were produced in the presence of all the people, they took him, and all his family, his cattle, his tent, and all his moveables, and carrying them to a neighbouring valley, (which, from that time, † in allusion to this man's name, was called the valley of Achar) ‖ there they stoned him, and those belonging to his family, as accomplices in his crimes. Whatever goods or utensils he had, these they consumed with fire, and so raised a great heap of stones over all, that thereby they might perpetuate the memory of the crime, and deter others from the like provocation.

After this execution of the Divine justice, God ordered Joshua to attempt the conquest of Ai once more, and promised him success; which might best be obtained, as he told him, by laying an ambuscade somewhere behind the city towards Bethel. †² Thirty thousand men were therefore drawn out, and sent away by night upon this expedition, with instructions to enter the city as soon as the signal (which was to be a spear with a banner upon it) was given them: And early next morning, he himself marched, with the remainder of his forces, against the city. As soon as the king of Ai perceived him, he sallied hastily out of the town with all his troops and all his people, and fell upon the Israelites, who at the first onset fled as if they had been under some great terror.

each of which was written the name of one of these twelve tribes: That when one of the twelve tribes were found guilty, then were there as many lots put in as there were families in that tribe; after that, as many as there were householders in that family; and, at last, as many as there were heads in that household, until the criminal was detected. But others will have it, that this was done by the high priest alone, who, by a Divine inspiration, at that time was enabled, without any more to do, to declare who the culpable person was. *Saurin's* Dissertations, vol. iii. *Le Clerc's* and *Patrick's* Commentaries on Josh. vii.

* In the original, this robe is called a *garment of Shinar*, i. e. of *Babylon*; and the general opinion is, that the richness and excellency of it consisted not so much in the stuff whereof it was made, as in the colour whereof it was dyed, which most suppose to have been scarlet, a colour in high esteem among the ancients, and for which the Babylonians were justly famous. *Bochart* however maintains, that the colour of this robe was various, and not all of one sort; that the scarlet colour, the Babylonians first received from Tyre, but the party colour, whether so woven or wrought with the needle, was of their own invention, for which he produces many passages out of heathen authors. Such as,

Non ego prætulerim Babylonica picta superbè
Texta, semiramîâ quæ variantur acu.

Mart. ep. lib. 8.

Hæc mihi memphitis tellus dat munera, victa est

Pectine niliaco jam Babylonis acus. *Ibid. lib. 14.*

with many more citations out of several other writers. However this be, it is certain, that the robe could not fail of being a very rich and splendid one, and therefore captivated either Achan's pride or rather covetousness; since his purpose seems to have been, not so much to wear it himself, as to sell it for a large price.

Bochart's Phaleg, lib. 1. c. 9. *Saurin*, lib. 3. Dissertation iii.

† Though his name was primarily Achan, yet ever after his execution he was called *Achar* (so the Syriac version, *Josephus*, *Athanasius*, *Basil*, and others mentioned by *Bochart*, name him), which signifies the *troubler of Israel*. *Patrick's* Comment. on Josh. viii.

‖ Since the law against sacrilege condemns transgressors to the flames, and God commanded the person here guilty to be burnt accordingly, Josh. vii. 18. the Jews affirm that Achan was actually burnt; and whereas it is said in the text that he was stoned, they think that this was done, not judicially, but accidentally by the people, who were so highly provoked, that they could not forbear casting stones at him as he was led to execution. Vid. *Munst.* in Josh. vii.

†² Some are of opinion, that this detachment of thirty thousand made up the whole force that was employed in this expedition against Ai; and that out of these five thousand were sent to lie in ambush, that at a convenient time they might set fire to the city. But this is so directly contrary to God's command of "Joshua's taking all the people of war with him," which accordingly, in chap. viii. 3, 11. we are told he did, that there is no foundation for it. And therefore it is reasonable to suppose, that the whole body designed for the ambuscade consisted of thirty thousand men, and that the five thousand mentioned in the 12th verse, was a small party detached from these, in order to creep closer to the city, while the five and twenty thousand kept themselves absconded behind the mountains, until a proper signal was given, both from the city, when this small party had taken it, and from the grand army, when they had repulsed the enemy, that then they might come out from their ambush, and intercept them as they were making their flight. *Patrick's* Commentary on Josh. viii.

But this was only a feint to draw the enemy into the plain; and therefore as soon as Joshua saw, that by this stratagem the city was pretty well emptied, he gave the signal to the ambuscade, which, finding it now defenceless, immediately entered and set it on fire.

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By the ascent of the smoke, Joshua discerned that his men had got possession of the town, and therefore facing about, he began to charge the enemy very briskly; who, little expecting that the Israelites would rally, began now to think of retreating to the city; but when they saw it all in flames, and the party which had set it on fire issuing out, and just going to fall upon their rear, they were so dismayed and dispirited, that they had power neither to fight nor fly; so that all the army was cut to pieces: the city was burnt and made an heap of rubbish; every soul in it, man, woman, and child, were put to the sword; and the king, who was taken prisoner, was ordered to be hanged upon a gibbet till sunset, when he was taken down, thrown in at a gate of the city, and a great heap of stones raised over him.

After this action was over, the cattle and all the spoil of the city was by God's appointment given to the soldiers; and as Joshua was now not far distant from the mountains of Gerizim and Ebal, this reminded him of the command which (a) Moses had given about reading the law, with the blessings and curses thereunto annexed, from those two mountains; which he not only ordered to be done, but had an altar likewise erected, whereon not only sacrifices were offered, to give God the glory of all his victories, but † an abridgement of the law, or some remarkable part of it, was likewise engraven, at the same time that the whole of it was read in a large assembly of all the tribes.

Joshua's success against the two towns of Jericho and Ai, and the terrible slaughter he had made among their inhabitants, had * so alarmed the kings on that side the Jordan, that they confederated together, and entered into league for their mutual defence: But the Gibeonites, foreseeing the destruction that was hastening upon them, endeavoured by a stratagem to gain a peace with the Israelites, which they effected in this manner.—They chose a certain number of artful men, who †² were instructed to feign

(a) Deut. xi. 29. and xxvii, 1—13.

† It is a question (as we said before, vol. i. page 584 in the notes) among the learned, what it was that was written upon these stones? But besides other conjectures already enumerated, some think it not unlikely to have been a copy of the covenant, by which the children of Israel acknowledged, that they held the land of Canaan of God, upon condition that they observed his laws, to which they and their posterity had obliged themselves; for this was the third time that the covenant between God and his people was renewed, and therefore the contents of that covenant might be very proper at this time to be thus monumentally recorded. *Patrick* on Deut. xxvii. 3. and Joshua viii. 32.

* The Jews, in the Talmud, tell us likewise, that a farther cause of the Gibeonites fear, was the inscription which they had met with upon Mount Ebal, where, among other parts of the law which Joshua (as they pretend) wrote upon stones, they found the orders which both he and Moses had received from God, utterly to extirpate all the inhabitants of the land of Canaan. *Saurin*, lib. iii. dissertation 4.

†² It is a question among the casuists, whether the Gibeonites could, with a good conscience, pretend that they were foreigners, and tell a lie to save their lives? And to this Puffendorf (*Droit de la Nature*, lib. iv. c. 2.) thus replies. "The artifice of the Gi-

beonites, says he, had nothing blameable in it, nor does it properly deserve the name of a lie; for what crime is there in any one's making use of an innocent fiction, in order to elude the fury of an enemy, that would destroy all before them? Nor did the Israelites indeed properly receive any damage from this imposture; for what does any one lose in not shedding the blood of another, when he has it in his power to take from him all his substance, after having so weakened and disarmed him that he is no more able to rebel against him?" But the opinion of this great man seems to be a little erroneous in this case. Had the Israelites indeed been a pack of common murderers, who, without any commission from heaven, were carrying blood and desolation into countries where they had no right; or had the Gibeonites been ignorant that a miraculous Providence conducted these conquerors, the fraud which they here put upon them might then be deemed innocent: For there is no law that obliges us, under the pretence of sincerity, to submit to such incendiaries, and merciless usurpers, as are for setting fire to our cities, and putting us and our families to the edge of the sword. But the case of the Gibeonites was particular; and if in other things they went contrary to truth, in this they certainly adhered to it, when they told Joshua, "We are come, because of the name of the Lord thy God, for we have heard of the fame of him, and all

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themselves ambassadors come from a far distant country, in order to obtain a league with the people of Israel: And to gain credit to this their pretence, they dressed themselves in old clothes, had old clouted shoes on their feet, carried dry musty bread in their bags, and the bottles wherein they kept their wine were † all sadly tarnished and torn. In this plight they came to the camp at Gilgal, and, being introduced to Joshua, they told him, "That the fame of many miracles which God had wrought for them in the land of Egypt, and the wonderful successes wherewith he had blessed their arms against every power that had opposed them in their coming to that place, had reached even their remote and distant country; for which reason their states and rulers had sent them a long way, that by all means imaginable they might obtain a peace with a people so renowned all the world over, and so favoured and honoured by God." And then shewing their clothes, shoes, and other tokens of the long journey they had taken, they solemnly assured them, that all these things were quite new when at first they set out from home, and thence left them to judge how distant and remote their country was.

This plausible story confirmed, as they thought, by so many evidences, gained credit with the Israelites, so that they entered into amicable alliance with them; and the other took care to have the treaty immediately ratified, both by Joshua and all the princes of the congregation. In three days time the imposture was discovered; and they who pretended to come from a distant country were found to be near neighbours, and some of those very people whom Joshua was commissioned to destroy: So that when the thing came to be rumoured about, the people began to murmur against their princes for their indiscretion, and were for having the league cancelled; but as it was confirmed by a solemn oath, this they could not do without incurring the Divine displeasure. And therefore, though they might not take away their lives, they might nevertheless hold them in a state of servitude, and, as long as they lived, make them useful drudges, hewers of wood, and drawers of water, and the like, which would both punish them much, and prove fully as beneficial to the commonwealth; and with this apology the people were appeased. Joshua however sent for some of the chief of the Gibeonites, and having expostulated the cheat with them (which they excused upon the score of saving their own lives), he told them what the determination of the princes was, viz. that they should remain in a state of perpetual bondage; which they received without any manner of murmuring, and humbly acquiesced in whatever was thought proper to be imposed upon them.

The confederate princes, hearing of this separate treaty, which the Gibeonites had made with Israel, were resolved to be revenged of them for their desertion of the common cause; and accordingly, joining all their forces together, they came and invested their town. The Gibeonites in this distress, not daring to trust to their own strength, sent an express to Joshua for speedy help; who set out with all expedition, and by quick marches, and the favour of the night, came upon the enemy sooner than they expected, and early next morning fell upon them, and routed them. In this expedition God had all along encouraged Joshua, and promised him success; and therefore, as the confederate forces were endeavouring to escape, and save themselves by flight, he poured such a storm of hail upon them, as destroyed more than what perished by the sword.

that he did in Egypt, and all that he did to the two kings of the Amorites, that were beyond Jordan, &c." Josh. ix. 9, 10. The idea which they had conceived of the God of Israel should have put them upon some other expedient than that of lying and deceit. They should have enquired (as far as the obscure dispensation they were under would have permitted them) into the cause of God's severity against them. They should have acknowledged, that it was their grievous sins which drew down this heavy judgement upon their nation; and after they had repented

thereof in sack-cloth and ashes, they should have committed the rest to Providence, never doubting but that he, who had changed the very course of nature to punish the guilty, would always find out some means or other to save the penitent; but this they did not do; and therefore they were culpable. *Saurin*, vol. iii. dissertation 4.

† These bottles were not of glass or clay, as those in use among us, but were made of leather, in which they formerly (and even now in some countries) kept their wine.

Joshua, on the other hand, was very desirous to make the most of this happy opportunity; and therefore, in full chase of victory, he addressed himself to God, that the sun and moon might stand still, and so prolong the day, until he had completed his victory which God was pleased to grant; so that this was the most memorable day that ever happened, wherein the "Almighty listened to the voice of a man" to change the course of nature, and stop the motion of those rolling orbs.

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The confederate kings being thus put to flight, and either frightened at the storm of hail, or at the close pursuit of the enemy, made to a cave near † Makkedah, and there ran in to hide themselves: but Joshua having intelligence of it, commanded the cave to be blocked up, and a guard to be set over it, and so continued his pursuit, that he might cut off as many as he possibly could before they reached to their fortified towns. In his return he ordered the cave to be opened, and the kings to be brought forth; and when execution was done upon them, he caused their bodies to be hanged upon several trees until the evening; when they were taken down, and cast into the cave where they thought to have hid themselves, so that the place of their intended sanctuary became their sepulchre. After this signal victory, Joshua took all the southern parts of Canaan, which afterwards belonged to the tribes of Judah, Simeon, Benjamin, Dan, and Ephraim; and having thus ended his second campaign, he returned with his army to the camp at Gilgal.

Here he continued for some time without entering upon any fresh action, until several princes of the north of Canaan, under Jabin king of Hazor, confederated together, and raised a vast number of forces, which encamped not far from †² the waters of Merom; and * what made the army more formidable, was the great number of horses and *²

† It was a city in the tribe of Judah, about eight miles distant from Eleutheropolis, which place, though it is no where mentioned in the Scripture History, because it was built after the destruction of Jerusalem, is nevertheless frequently taken notice of by Eusebius and Jerom, as a point from whence they measure the distances of other places. Its name imports a free city, and was itself situate in the tribe of Judah. *Wells's Geography of the Old Testament*, vol. ii. c. 4.

†² These waters are generally supposed by learned men to be the lake Semechon, which lies between the head of the river Jordan and the lake of Gennesareth; since it is agreed on all hands that the city Hazor, where Jabin reigned, was situate upon this lake. But others think, that the waters of Merom, or Merome, were somewhere about the brook Kishon; since there is a place of that name mentioned in the account of the battle against Sisera, Judges v. 21. And it is more rational to think, that the confederate kings advanced as far as the brook Kishon, and to a pass which led into their country, to hinder Joshua from penetrating it, or even to attack him in the country where he himself lay encamped, than to imagine that they waited for him in the midst of their own country, leaving all Galilee at his mercy, and the whole tract from the brook of Kishon to the lake Semechon. *Wells's Geography of the Old Testament*, vol. iii. c. 5. *Reland's Palest. lib.* 1. c. 40. and *Calmet* on Josh. xi. 5.

* Their whole army, according to Josephus, was computed to amount to three hundred thousand foot, ten thousand horse, and two thousand chariots; and to oppose against these the Israelites had no horse

in their armies, because God had interdicted them, (Deut. xvii. 16.) lest a traffic into Egypt for that sort of cattle should be a snare to entangle them in idolatry; or lest, having a quantity thereof, they should put their confidence rather in them than in the Divine assistance; for which reason the prophet denounces a "woe upon them that go down into Egypt for help, and stay on horses, and trust in chariots, because they are many, and in horsemen, because they are strong, but they look not to the Holy One of Israel, neither seek they the Lord, Isa. xxxi. 1.

*² The chariots, which the ancient historians usually call *currus falciferi*, *covini falciferi*, *quadrigæ falcatae*, *ἀρματα δρεπανόφερα*, &c. are described after the following manner: "The beam, to which the horses were fastened, was armed with spikes with iron-points, which projected forward: The yokes of the horses had two cutting falchions of three cubits length: The axle-trees had fixed to them two iron spits, with scythes at their extremities; the spokes of the wheels were armed with javelins, and the very fellows with scythes, which tore every thing they met with to pieces. The axle-tree was longer, and the wheels stronger than usual, that they might be the better able to bear a shock, and the chariot less liable to be overturned." The charioteer, who was covered all over with armour, sat in a kind of tower made of very solid wood, about breast high, and sometimes men well armed were put into the chariot, and fought from thence with darts and arrows. So that a dreadful slaughter these machines must at first have made when they met with the enemy's troops; but, in time, when men came to find out the way of declining them, they did not do so much execution, and were conse-

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armed chariots they had, whereas the Israelites were all on foot. This, however, did not in the least discourage Joshua, who, in pursuance of the instructions which God had given him, immediately took the field, marched directly towards the enemy, fell suddenly upon them, and put all (except those * that made their escape into other countries) to the sword; hamstrung their horses, and burnt their chariots with fire. Jabin had been the head of the confederacy against him; and therefore he killed him, and caused his city to be burnt to the ground; but the other cities, whose inhabitants were slain in battle, he left standing, and gave the plunder of them to the soldiers.

Thus Joshua subdued all the land of Canaan † by degrees: He put its inhabitants, its kings (who were one and thirty in number), and all the giants that dwelt therein, except some few that still remained among the Philistines, to the sword; and having now extended his conquest, as far as it was convenient at that time, he began to think of dividing the country among the tribes that were yet unprovided for, and of dismissing the two tribes and an half, who had accompanied him in the wars, but had their habitations already settled by Moses on the east side of the river Jordan. To this purpose he appointed commissioners, who should take an exact survey of the country, and bring in a full report without delay; which, when they had done, †² the country was di-

quently disused. Vid. *Diodorus Siculus*, lib. 17. *Quint. Curtius*, lib. 4. *Xenophon*, *Cyropæd.* lib. 6. *Lucretius*, *De Rer. Nat.* lib. 6.

* Some Jewish authors will needs have it, that when Joshua went into the land of Canaan he proposed three things to the inhabitants thereof, either that they should leave the country, or come and make their submission, or take up arms and fight him. But this is said in some measure to excuse the Jewish general, and to mollify the rigour of his proceedings. His express command from God was to extirpate the seven nations, without making any treaty or giving quarter: And, though the Gibeonites by guile had obtained a kind of league with him, yet the conditions which he thereupon imposed, were so very hard, that they could not but deter others from making the like attempt. It is not therefore to be wondered, that the Canaanites, who saw themselves drove to the necessity either of death or slavery, (after they had tried the fate of their arms so often to no purpose), should endeavour to make their escape from a people everywhere victorious, and who were enjoined to be cruel and remorseless by their very God who had given them this success. Nor can we suppose that that God, who was minded to make room for his own people, did (according to his promise, *Exod.* xxiii. 27.) inject upon this occasion a terror extraordinary into the natives of the country, and make them desire to be gone: And when they were desirous to be gone, they had ports, lying upon the Mediterranean Sea, very commodious for their purpose. For whether the towns of Tyre and Sidon were at this time built or no, it is certain that the places where these towns stood could not but be proper harbours for shipping; and as the Phœnicians were still masters of the sea-coasts, by their assistance the Canaanites might make their escape into what parts they pleased. The Phœnicians, much about this time, did certainly send out a vast many colonies; but, as it cannot be supposed that so small a country should

produce such swarms, the greatest part of them are presumed to be the refugees of Canaan, who made their escape by shipping to all the coasts which lay round the Mediterranean and Ægean Seas, and even to other parts of Europe, Asia, and Africa, as the learned Bochart has given us a large account in his Canaan, from page 345—699. *Calmet's Dissertation sur le Pays, où se sauverent les Cananéens chassés par Josué.*

† These great achievements may be allowed to have taken up some years. The history indeed informs us, that "Joshua made war a long time with all these kings," *Josh.* xi. 18. And from the words of Caleb, wherein he gives Joshua an account of his age, and that it was five and forty years since he was sent a spy to Kadesh-barnea, there cannot be well less than between six and seven years spent in this war; and why the war was so long continued, God himself assigns this reason:—"I will not drive them out from before thee in one year, lest the land become desolate, and the beasts of the field multiply against thee: By little and little will I drive them out from before thee, until thou be increased and inherit the land." *Exod.* xxiii. 29, 30.

†² Those who are minded to know what particular towns and territories fell to each tribe, had best consult what Josephus, in his *Jewish Antiquities*; Jerome, *de Locis Hebraicis*; Reland, *de Urbibus et Vicis Palestinæ*; Masius, in *Joshua*; Fuller, in his *Pisgah-sight*; Raleigh, in his *History*, part i. lib. 2. Wells, in his *Geography of the Old Testament*, vol. ii. Patrick, Pool, Le Clerc, and several others, in their Commentaries, have said upon this subject. We shall make this one remark, which Masius, in his rich Commentary upon Joshua, furnishes us with, viz. that as Jacob and Moses, at the approach of their deaths, foretold the very soil and situation of every particular country that should fall to each tribe; so, upon this division by lots, it accordingly came to pass. To the tribe of Judah, there fell a country abounding

vided into equal portions, for which each tribe (according (a) to God's directions) cast lots : But because some tribes were larger, and some territories richer than others, Joshua and Eleazar, together with the princes of the people, took care to adjust the proportion of land to the largeness of the tribe, and in subdividing that, to consider the number of each family and household ; pursuing exactly the orders which God gave to his servant Moses : (b) " Unto these the land shall be divided for an inheritance, according to the number of names. To many thou shalt give the more inheritance ; and to few thou shalt give the less inheritance.—Notwithstanding the land shall be divided by lot ;—according to lot shall the possession thereof be divided among many and few."

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Having thus divided the country on the west side of the Jordan, Joshua had a little place given him for his own habitation not far from Shiloh, where, after the wars, the tabernacle was set up, that he might have an opportunity of consulting God upon any occasion ; and, after all things were in this manner regulated, he called together the Reubenites, Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh, who had served for almost seven years as auxiliaries in the wars of Canaan, and gave them an honourable dismissal. " He acknowledged, that they had duly executed the condition which they promised to Moses, in accompanying their brethren, and helping them to subdue their enemies, and commended their courage and fidelity for so doing. He exhorted them, now that they were going to separate from the tabernacle, never to neglect the service of God, but to bear always in mind those venerable laws which he had given them by his great legislator. He advised them to distribute a share of the rich booty they had taken from the Canaanites among their brethren on the other side of Jordan ; because, though they had not partaken of the peril of the late war, they had nevertheless done them great service, in protecting their families from the insults of their enemies on every side : " And * with these acknowledgments and exhortations, together with many sincere wishes for their prosperity and welfare, *² he sent them away ; but they had not been long gone, before a sad misunderstanding had like to have happened between them and the other tribes.

Upon their arrival on the other side of Jordan, they erected an altar near the place where they and their brethren had miraculously passed over, not for any religious use,

with vines and pasture-grounds, Gen. xlix. 11. To that of Ashur, one plenteous in oil, iron, and brass, Deut. xxxiii. 24, 25. To that of Naphthali, one extending from the west to the south of Judea, ibid. xxxiii. 23. To that of Benjamin, one in which the temple was afterwards built, ibid. xxxiii. 12. To those of Zebulun and Issachar, such as had plenty of sea-ports, Gen. xlix. 13. To those of Ephraim and Manasseh, such as were renowned for their precious fruits, Deut. xxxiii. 14. And to those of Simeon and Levi, no particular countries at all ; for as much as the former had a portion with Judah, and the other was interspersed among the several tribes. Since therefore (as our commentator reasons) each particular lot answered so exactly to each prediction, it must needs be the height of insolence or stupidity not to acknowledge the Divine inspiration in these predictions, and the Divine direction in these lots.

(a) Josh. xiv. 2. (b) Numb. xxvi. 53, &c.

* Josephus, in the speech which he introduces Joshua making to the Reubenites, &c. at their parting, concludes with these words :—" But, I pray ye, let no distance of place set limits to our friendship. The interposition of rivers must never divide our affections : for, on which bank soever, we are all Hebrews still. Abraham was the common father of us all, let

our abode be where it will. It was from one and the same God that all our forefathers received their being ; and that God we are all to worship, according to the ordinances and institutions left us by Moses. So long as we stand firm to that way of religion, we may be sure of the favour and protection of that God for our comfort ; but whenever you apostatise into an hankering after strange gods, the God of your fathers will cast you off." *Jewish Antiquities*, lib. 5. c. 1.

*² The *Chronicon Samaritanum* (if we may believe what it reports, page 92, 93.) tells us, that when Joshua sent the Reubenites away, he appointed Nephthali to be his deputy on the other side of Jordan ; that he clothed him with a royal robe, put a crown on his head, and made him ride on an horse of state, whilst a crier went before him, proclaiming, " This is the king of the two tribes and an half, the president of justice, the director of affairs, and the general in the camp : Let his determination be conclusive. In all difficult causes let him desire an answer from Eleazar the high priest ; and if any one shall contradict his sentence, or withdraw from his allegiance, it shall be lawful for any one to kill that man, and the whole congregation shall be blameless." [This seems to be a groundless fiction.]

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but as a memorial to succeeding generations, that though they were parted by the river, yet they were of the same extract and religion, and held an equal right to the tabernacle at Shiloh, and to the worship of God performed there, that the inhabitants of the other side had. But whether those on the other side were misinformed, or misapprehended their intent, so it was that they fell into a violent rage against them, as apostates from the true religion; and immediately took up arms for the vindication of the worship and religion of their forefathers, and to avenge the cause of God upon the heads and chief authors of this defection. But before they proceeded to these extremities, they were advised by their rulers to suspend the execution of their wrath, until they had sent a deputation to them, in order to know the reason of their building such an altar; which accordingly they did, and made choice of Phineas, the son of Eleazar, with ten other persons of eminent distinction, to go upon the embassy. As soon as they were come into the land † of Gilead, * they represented the great surprise that the rest of the tribes were in at their building this altar; and told them very roundly, that they feared it portended a defection into idolatry. To dissuade them therefore from that, they put them in mind of the calamities which God had formerly sent upon them for their worship of Baal peor; and that, if so lately he had been so severe upon them for the offence of one man, viz. Achan only, what might they not expect, when two tribes and an half were going to make a general revolt? And as they suspected that the absence of the tabernacle might give some occasion to this innovation, they invited them to come and live among them, where they might not want an opportunity of serving God, according to the custom of their ancestors.

Concerned to hear the ill opinion which their brethren had thus conceived of them, the Reubenites, Gadites, and Manassites *² protested their innocence of any idolatrous intention, and made a solemn appeal to God, that so far were they from setting up any altar in opposition to his, that the only design of that structure was to perpetuate their

† Gilead, which took its name from Gilead, the son of Machir, and grandson of Manasseh, is often put for the whole country that lies on the east side of Jordan, which the children of Israel took from the Moabites and Midianites, &c.

* Josephus makes Phineas the speaker upon this occasion, who delivers his commission in words to this effect:—"We are very sensible that the crime charged upon you at present is too heinous to be punished by words only; but we have not taken up arms (hand over head) to execute a vengeance according to the degree of the iniquity: For it is out of respect to our allies, and in hopes that second and sounder thoughts may bring you to better reason, that we are engaged upon this embassy, and speak in this assembly. We do but desire to be sincerely informed, upon what motives, and with what design you have now raised this altar. If you have done it out of any pious end, we have no quarrel with you; but if you are gone over to a false worship, it is for our God and our religion that we must draw our swords against you. We speak our fears; for we cannot think it credible yet, that a people, so well instructed in the will and in the laws of God, our friends and allies that we have but just now parted with, a people newly established in the lot of a plentiful possession by God's special grace and Providence; we cannot, I say, believe you to be so insensible and ungrateful, as to abandon the holy tabernacle, the ark, the altar, and the worship of your forefathers, to join with the Canaanites in the wor-

ship of false gods: Or if unhappily you should have been so misled, do but repent and disclaim your error, and return to that reverence you owe to the laws of God and of your country, and you shall be still received, &c." *Jewish Antiquities*, lib. 5. c. 1.

*² If we can suppose any truth in the Samaritan tradition, Nephiet, who is said to have been Joshua's lieutenant over the two tribes and a half, may very properly be thought the person who answered Phineas in the words which Josephus thus puts in his mouth:—"We are not conscious of having ever departed from your alliance, neither are we in any sort guilty of that affectation of novelty in erecting this altar, which is now charged upon us. We know but one God, and that God is the God of all the Hebrews; and but one altar, which is the brazen altar before the tabernacle. As for this altar here, which we are suspected for, it was never intended for any religious use, but only for a civil memorial to future times of our friendship and alliance, and rather to keep us steady in our ancient religion, than to be any ways introductive to the violation of it. We can safely appeal to God, that we had no such thought in setting up this altar as is imputed to us: And therefore, let us intreat you to have a better opinion of your brethren for the future, than to think us guilty of so mortal an apostacy from the rites and customs of our progenitors, a sin not to be expiated in any of the sons of Abraham, but with the loss of his life. *Jewish Antiquities*, lib. 5. c. 1.

title to the service of the tabernacle, and to prevent their latest posterity from being excluded from it. Which when Phineas and the rest of the deputies heard, they expressed no small satisfaction; and as they related the account of the whole matter upon their return, the people were infinitely pleased with the result of their embassy, and changed their angry thoughts of war into the tender affections of brotherly love and peace: While the Reubenites, on the other hand, to take away all farther umbrage of suspicion, called the altar by the name of *Ed*, as being intended for a standing witness (for so the word signifies), that though they lived at a distance from the rest of their brethren, yet had they both but one origin, and one God, who was the common God and father of all Israel.

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Thus were the Israelites, on both sides of the river Jordan, settled in a quiet possession of their conquests; when Joshua, being now grown old, and perceiving the time of his death approaching, called a general assembly of the princes and magistrates, and as many of the common people as could be got together upon this occasion, to Shechem; and having, in a very tender and affectionate speech, enumerated the many blessings which God's providence had bestowed upon them and their ancestors; how he had preserved them in all their dangers and distresses, and relieved them in all their wants; had made them victorious over all their enemies, and, from a mean beginning, raised them to the highest degree of reputation, and brought them into the quiet possession of a land that abounded with all manner of plenty; in gratitude to so great a protector and benefactor, he exhorted them to a faithful observance of his laws, and invited them to a solemn renewal of the covenant which their forefathers had made with him. Which, when they had done, he not only recorded the covenant in the book of the law, but set up a great stone likewise, under an oak, near a place of religious worship, as a testimony against them, in case they should prevaricate from God's service; and being now in the hundred and tenth year of his age, * not long after this he died, and was buried at Timnah-serah, in Mount Ephraim, a place which the Israelites, in acknowledgment of his great services, had given him.

In a short time after, Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, who lived near Joshua,

* Jesus the son of Sirach gives us a long commendation of Joshua, Ecclus. xlv. 1, &c. but Josephus is more concise in his character, where he tells us,—“That he was a man of political prudence, and endowed also with a singular felicity of popular eloquence in expressing his thoughts; brave and indefatigable in war; and no less just and dexterous in peace; and in short, that he was a person qualified for all great purposes.” He is generally reputed to be the author of the book that goes under his name. In the 26 verse of the last chapter, it is expressly said that he wrote these things. Ecclus. xlv. 1. The son of Sirach has made him successor to Moses in the prophetic ministry. And both the church and synagogue have all along looked upon the book as canonical. The truth is, Joshua was the only sacred penman we know of that the Israelites had in his age. After he had finished the division of the land, it is said, chap. xxiii. 1. that he had many years of great leisure, which he very probably employed in giving an account of the death and burial of Moses, and from thence continued a narrative of what had been transacted under his own administration, filling it up with a general terrier of the settlements of the tribes, which was highly expedient for the Israelites to have recorded, in order to prevent confusions about their inheritances in future ages.

Now if this supposition be right, the work of Joshua must begin where that of Moses ended, viz. at the xxxivth chapter of Deuteronomy, and ended at the 27th verse of the xxivth chapter of Joshua. For as Joshua, at the end of Deuteronomy, added an account of Moses's death, so what we find from the 28th verse of the xxivth chapter of Joshua to the end of that book, was unquestionably not written until Joshua and all the elders his contemporaries were gone off the stage, and was therefore added to the end of the book of Joshua by some sacred penman, (most probably by Samuel) who was afterwards employed to record the subsequent state of affairs of Israel. *Shuckford's Connection*, vol. iii. lib. 12. and *Patrick's Commentary*, on Josh. xxiv. 33. But there is not the like certainty of another book of Joshua's, which the Samaritans preserve with much respect, and make great use of, in the support of their pretensions against the Jews; neither can we tell, whether Joshua was the author of that prayer, which the Jews repeat as oft as they go into the synagogues, and which begins thus,—“It is our duty to praise thee Lord of the universe, and to celebrate the creation of the world; for he hath not made us like unto the nations of the earth, but hath prepared for us an inheritance infinitely richer and greater, &c. *Wagenseil's Tela Ignea Satanae*, p. 223. and *Calmet's Dictionary*, under the word.

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and died soon after him, was buried not far from him, in one of the hills of Ephraim; † a place which the Israelites had in like manner presented him with, and which afterwards descended to Phineas, his son and successor in the priesthood. And as the funerals of these two great men, so near the same time and place, called to remembrance the bones of Joseph, which, at his request, * had been brought out of Egypt, but not yet interred, the two tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh took this opportunity to perform their obsequies to the remains of their great progenitor, in a parcel of ground near Shechem, which Jacob having formerly bought, had (a) given to his son Joseph, and was now become the inheritance of his posterity.

THE OBJECTION.

“JOSHUA, no doubt, was a very expert general, and the success of his arms against the Canaanites makes no mean figure in history; but a great deal of this may be resolved into the treachery and perfidiousness, the folly and infatuation, of those that pretended to oppose him. How despicable an instrument soever an harlot may be, yet certainly Rahab stood Joshua in no small stead, when she concealed the spies, and (as we may suppose) helped them to the best intelligence that she could. In the New Testament indeed, she is ranked among very good company, and her character and commendation (b) is twice commemorated, but for what reason we cannot tell, unless it be (c) for lying to the government, and betraying her country into the hands of its most cruel enemies; which is surely an example that deserves our detestation rather than praise.

The Israelites were commanded by God (whose injunctions we are not to dispute) (d) ‘to have no mercy upon the inhabitants of Canaan, but to smite and utterly destroy them;’ and therefore it looks like mere madness and infatuation, that a people, who knew themselves devoted to destruction, (instead of going over to the enemy, or opposing them by piece-meal) did not confederate all together, either to expel those in-

† This place is in the Hebrew called the Hill of Phineas, it being customary in those days for men to call places by the names of their eldest son. But then the question is, to whom did the Israelites give this hill? The most probable answer is, that they gave it to Eleazar; for he being the high priest, at the time of the division of the land, they thought proper to give him a peculiar portion distinct from other cities of the priests, which were all in the tribes of Judah, Benjamin, and Simeon, and none in the tribe of Ephraim, Josh. xxi. 9, 17, 19. And they made choice of this country the rather, that he might be near the tabernacle, which was at Shiloh, and near to Joshua, who lived at Shechem, to be ready on all occasions to advise him, and consult the oracle for him. But then against this there lies an objection, viz. that no Levite or priest was to have any portion in the division of the land; and therefore it is a received opinion among the Jews, that either Eleazar or Phineas had this inheritance in right of his wife: Though we cannot see, why the high priest especially, who was certainly the second person in the government, might not have a mansion-house, and some domains allot-

ted him, for the greater state and dignity of his living, without any great infringement upon the general laws. *Patrick's Commentary on Josh. xxiv. 33.*

* It may reasonably be thought, that the bodies of the rest of the sons of Jacob, from whom the twelve tribes descended, were brought into Canaan to be there interred, as Josephus relates from ancient tradition, *Antiquities* lib. 2. c. 4. and as St Stephen confirms it, Acts vii. 16. For though Joseph excelled them all in dignity, and gave this special charge about his body, yet every tribe, no doubt, had as great a regard for their progenitor, and would be inclined to do the same for their fathers that Joseph's descendants did for him: But whether they buried them in the sepulchre of Machpelah, or in some eminent place in their own tribe, as Joseph was buried, there is no one that gives us any account. *Patrick's Comment. on Josh. xxiv. 32.*

(a) Gen. xlviii. 22.

(b) Heb. xi. 31. and James ii. 25.

(c) *Christianity as old as the Creation*, p. 263.

(d) Deut. vii. 2.

vaders from their countries, or to sell their own lives and liberties at as dear a price as possible*.

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to the end.

Some of these nations were accounted a bold and warlike people; but certainly the inhabitants of Jericho acted like mere poltrons, when they cooped themselves up within the walls of the city, and never once thought of disputing the pass over the river Jordan. For, whatever we may talk of that wonderful passage, it is evident (a) from the testimony of travellers, that the river was no more than a brook in comparison, and fordable in several places, as (b) the Scripture itself allows. But even suppose it was not, it is no uncommon thing (c) in history, to read of rivers larger than this, by the force of some contrary wind, driven back, and their channels laid dry.

For a people observant of his laws, God, no doubt will, and often does, work wonders, in order to give them an advantage over their enemies; but it is hard to conceive what reason there should be for exerting any miraculous power in behalf of those who, as if ashamed of the covenant made with their forefather Abraham, had now omitted the sacrament of circumcision so long; and, in a short time after, had no manner of regard to God's sabbath, when they went sounding their horns about Jericho, or rather (as some think) assaulted the town, and imbrued their hands in the blood of so many innocents, on that sacred day.

Instead of rams horns, which are a little improper, one would think, to make musical instruments of, a soldier would be tempted to say, that the Israelites made use of battering-rams upon this occasion: But those who have studied the philosophy of sounds, will tell us, that they have a certain natural fitness to break and demolish solid bodies; or if this was not the case, from the violent effects of subterraneous eruptions, or the blowing up some magazines of powder, one would really imagine, that the fall of the walls of Jericho was occasioned by some natural cause.

Joshua, as an old experienced general, was doubtless master of many stratagems, which the ignorant herd knew nothing of; and therefore he might give the word of command for them to shout aloud, when, at the same time, he ordered the match to be laid to the train, that led to the mine under the walls, and so they, poor creatures, might imagine, that it was either their noise, or some miraculous stroke that made them fall; when, in reality, the whole was affected by nothing else but some new device in war. But by what means soever he vanquished the city, it seems a little extravagant, if not brutal in him, after he had laid it in ashes, to load it with such heavy imprecations, when he had lost no men, and met with so little molestation in taking it.

What the mysterious oracle of Urim and Thummim may be, it is past the skill of man perhaps to know; but be it what it will, it seems to have done the Israelites no great service, when it could not hinder Joshua and the other princes, no not even Eleazar himself, who wore it, from being imposed on by the Gibeonites. The Gibeonites indeed acted the crafty part, and since it was to save themselves, were not much to be discommended; but certainly the Israelites might have known better, than to think themselves bound by an oath, that was not only drawn from them by wile and artifice, but was repugnant likewise to that Divine injunction which previously obliged them to extirpate all the Canaanites, even though they sued for peace never so earnestly, and

*[Had our author lived in the present age, he would hardly have made his deist urge the supine infatuation of the different nations of Canaan, as an objection to the credibility of the sacred narrative. We have seen the nations of Europe look, with perfect indifference for twenty years, on one great power subduing them all one by one, without uniting in a body to repel the unjust invader; and, among the petty nations of Canaan, there may have been as much mu-

tual jealousy as there undoubtedly was as much corruption in the days of Joshua, as there is at present among the great nations of Europe.]

(a) *Sandys's Travels*, lib. iii. p. 141.

(b) Josh. ii. 7.

(c) Vid. *Pliny's Hist.* lib. ii. cap. 102. *Dionys. Halicarn. Antiq. Roman.* lib. vi. p. 351, and lib. vii. p. 409.

A. M. 2553, &c. or 3883. (a) to make no covenant with them, even though they offered to become proselytes never so sincerely.

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The Israelites indeed, according to the representation which Joshua gives us of them, were at the best but a giddy, thoughtless kind of people, elated with successes, dejected with any misfortunes, and wild and boisterous in the prosecution of their passions; for to insult over one poor city with imprecations and curses, when it already lay in ashes (as was the case at Jericho), to droop in their courage, and utterly despond, upon a small defeat given them at another (as was the case of Ai), and to fly into a flame, take up arms, and vow revenge, though they knew not well for what (as was the case between them and their brethren beyond Jordan), argues such a baseness of mind, and barbarity of temper, and rudeness of manners, as but badly become the elect people of God.

But well may the author of this book make thus free with his people, when he is not afraid to record such things as cannot but reflect dishonour upon the sacred attributes of God himself. Achan indeed was a wicked man in purloining some part of the plunder to himself; but what had his poor children done that they must be committed to the same flames? The city of Ai had given the Israelites some molestation, and was to be subdued at all adventures; but what necessity was there for God to make use of stratagem and artifice (means which seem below the greatness of the Almighty, and * which some nations and generals have rejected, as unworthy brave men) to give the victory to his own creatures.

To these people of his indeed, he had been very kind in giving them what he did of the land of Canaan; but since his promise extended to the whole, since (b) 'from the wilderness, and this Lebanon, unto the great river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and unto the great sea, towards the going down of the sun (as he assured Joshua), was to be their coast,' it looks a little strange, that God should falsify his promise (for all these territories they never possessed), and thus cut them short.

Other slips in our author may be excuseable; his talking of the (c) sanctuary's being at Shechem, when indisputably it was at Shiloh, may charitably be imputed to some small defect of memory; but it really shocks one, and is enough to impeach the authority of the book itself, to find recorded in it such passages as seem to leave an imputation of cruelty, craft, and breach of promise upon God, whom all mankind must allow to be the fountain and foundation of all honour, truth, and goodness."

ANSWER. (d) "Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the gods? Who is like unto thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders? Thou, in thy mercy, has led forth the people, whom thou hast redeemed; thou hast guided them in thy strength, unto thy holy habitation. The people shall hear, and shall be afraid; sorrow shall take hold on the inhabitants of Palestina. The elders of Edom shall be amazed; the mighty men of Moab shall tremble, and all the inhabitants of Canaan shall melt away. Fear and dread shall fall upon them. By the greatness of thy arm they shall be as still as a stone, till thy people pass over, O Lord, till thy people pass over, whom thou hast purchased. Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance, in the place, O Lord, which thou hast made for them to dwell in; in the sanctuary, O Lord, which thy hand hath established."

(a) Deut. vii. 2, &c.

* It was the expression of Alexander the Great, that he would not steal a victory. The ancient Greeks gave notice to their enemies, when and where they should engage them. The old Romans knew not what cunning and subtle wiles in carrying on war meant: "Non fraude, neque occultè, sed palàm, et armatum populum Romanum hostes suos ulcisci."

They sought victory only by force and honest fighting, desiring that their enemies might be convinced of their valour, and submit to them without regret, because they were the stronger. *Calmet's Comment.* on Josh. viii.

(b) Josh. i. 4.

(c) Ibid. xxiv. 25, 26.

(d) Exod. xv. 11, &c.

These words are part of that triumphant song, which Moses made upon the destruction of the Egyptians in the Red Sea. They are plain predictions of what befel the Israelites forty years after, and a declaration they are, that the conquest of their country was not only by the order and appointment, but by the immediate help and assistance of God; (a) “for (as the Psalmist expresses it) they got not the land in possession through their own sword, neither was it their own arm that helped them; but thy right hand, and thine arm, and the light of thy countenance, because thou hast a favour unto them.” And if God so immediately concerned himself in the conquest of the country, we need not wonder that we hear of the people, who were to defend it, being amazed and trembling, and melting away for fear. The Jewish doctors have a tradition, that the vast heaps of waters, piled upon one another, while the Israelites passed over the river Jordan, being seen by the people of Jericho, and other adjacent places, occasioned so general a consternation that they never once thought of maintaining the pass. And indeed their consternation must have been very great, when we find them enclosing themselves within their walls, and suffering the Israelites to surround them seven days successively, without even once attempting to make a sally. They saw, in short, that a power, superior to all human opposition, was engaged against them; and therefore, whatever prior measures they had taken for their mutual defence, upon the approach of an army commanded by one who, when he pleases, (b) “maketh the devices of the people ineffectual, and casteth out the counsels of princes,” they were all broken and disconcerted.

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to the end.

It cannot be denied indeed, but that, in ancient times, there was a great affinity between the business of an hostess and an harlot. Those who kept inns, or public houses for the entertainment of strangers, made no scruple of prostituting their bodies; and for this reason perhaps it is, that, in the Hebrew tongue, there is but one word, viz. *zonah*, to denote persons of both professions. For this reason very likely it was, that the Septuagint, speaking of Rahab, gives her the appellation of an harlot, and (as the Septuagint was at this time the common translation of the Jews) for this very reason the two apostles, (c) St Paul and (d) St James, as they found it in the translation, might make use of the same expression. It is to be observed, however, that as the expression is capable of another sense, the Chaldee paraphrast calls her by a word, which comes from the Greek *Παδοχεντρία*, or *a woman that kept a public house*, without any work of infamy; and therefore charity should incline us to think the best of a person, whom both these apostles have ranked with Abraham, the father of the faithful, and propounded as an example of faith and good works; who was admitted into the society of God's people; married into a † noble family of the tribe of Judah; and of whose posterity Christ, the Saviour of the world, was born. [At the same time let it be remembered, that, supposing her to have been a harlot in the worst sense of the word, the licentiousness of her life was probably the offspring of the false religion, in which she had been educated, and that when she was admitted into the true church, her sins might be forgiven her, and her mind purified by the Spirit of God, just as was, long afterwards, the case of the Gentile converts to the religion of Christ. Abraham had been an idolater in his youth; and who will take it upon him to say, that his life was then purer than Rahab's? Though the father of the faithful became the greatest character of his age.]

To save the lives of the innocent is certainly a very commendable thing; but whether it may be done by the help of dissimulation and falsehood, or whether Rahab, in concealing the spies, and pretending to the king's messengers that they were just gone,

(a) Psal. xlv. 3, 4.

(c) Heb. xi. 31.

(d) Jam. ii. 25.

† Rahab married Salmon, a prince of Judah, by

(b) Ibid. xxxiii. 10.

whom she had Boaz. Boaz was father of Obed, Obed of Jesse, and Jesse of king David; so that Jesus Christ did not disdain to reckon this Canaanitish woman among his ancestors. *Calmet's Dictionary*.

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did not incur the sin of wilful lying, is a question not so very easy to be resolved. Men, as they are members of a civil society, have certainly a right to truth, and the very design of speech is to be the conveyance of our real sentiments to one another; but some casuists are of opinion, that circumstances may so happen, as to make it both lawful and necessary, not only to disguise the truth, but to impose upon others by a false information. Suppose a madman, for instance, with a drawn sword in his hand, should pursue a friend of mine with a full intent to kill him; and my friend, by the benefit of some short turning, gives him the drop, so that, having lost sight of him, he comes and demands of me which way he took; but I, instead of setting him right, point the assassin another way: In this case, I presume, I commit no crime, because the man in these circumstances has forfeited all right to truth, nor could I indeed impart it to him without making myself instrumental to my friend's murder. This, in a great measure, was Rahab's case. Her design was to save the spies from the hands of those that were sent to apprehend them, but in vain had she formed such a design, unless she was resolved to put it in execution; and yet, what other way had she of executing it but by telling a lie? It had been to no purpose for her to have hid them on the roof of her house, if, for the sake of truth, she had thought herself obliged to discover the place of their concealment; if her silence had given any umbrage of suspicion to their pursuers; if she had not, in short, by a bold assertion, diverted their enquiry some other way. In this case the design and the means of executing it were inseparable. And yet, since a design, which could no ways be executed without the help of a lie, is both praised and proposed in Scripture as a pattern for the church to imitate, what right have we to condemn it? Or, upon what presumption can we imagine, that Rahab would have acted more agreeably to the mind of God, in discovering the spies out of respect to truth, than she did in preserving them by virtue of a feigned story*? But there is another way of accounting for Rahab's conduct, and that is this—(a) The author of the epistle to the Hebrews informs us, that (b) “by faith she perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace;” where the Greek words are not *τοῖς ἀπίστοις*, with the unbelievers, but *τοῖς ἀπειθήσασι*, with the disobedient, or those that were not persuaded of the truth of what was told them. But how the inhabitants of Jericho can be said to be unconvinced or disobedient, if God had revealed nothing to them, or required nothing of them, we cannot conceive. Some information must have been given both to them and Rahab, otherwise they could not be condemned for disobedience, nor she commended for her faith, i. e. for believing and acting according to the will of God made known unto her. Upon the supposition, then, that the design of God towards the inhabitants of Canaan was some way or other revealed to the king and people of Jericho, and both he and they had been sufficiently warned to save themselves from the destruction that was coming upon them, if they would not obey, but if Rahab did, and acted conformably to the information that was given her, her whole behaviour will not only stand clear of every criminal imputation, but be highly commendable, and justly deserve a rank among those illustrious patterns which the apostle proposes to our imitation, as being a person justified, not only by her faith, (c) but her works likewise, “when she received the messengers, and sent them out another way.”

The declaration which their kind protectress makes to them, (d) “I know that the Lord hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you, for the Lord your God he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath,” bespeaks the full persuasion of her mind; and therefore,

* [All that our author has hitherto said in vindication of Rahab is nothing to the purpose. His supposed madman would have no right to the truth, which the magistrates of Jericho unquestionably had. Their right however might be set aside by a higher autho-

riety, as he shews it to have probably been; and therefore what follows is conclusive.]

(a) *Shuckford's Connection*, vol. iii. lib. xii.

(b) Heb. xi. 31.

(c) James ii. 25.

(d) Josh. ii. 9, 11.

not doubting but that the Ruler of the universe had an uncontrollable right to dispose of all kingdoms and countries according to his good pleasure, she judged it reasonable "to obey God rather than man," and thereupon endeavoured, as much as in her lay, to deliver up the land to the true owners, to those whom God by his donation had made its rightful proprietors.

From Josh. i.
to the end.

An order from heaven most certainly releases the subject from his allegiance to his prince, and the citizen from the engagement he lies under to those that are of the same society : and therefore Rahab, having such an order (or at least what was equivalent to it), was at full liberty to espouse what party she pleased, and must have been perfidious to God, and forgetful of her own preservation, if she had acted otherwise than she did. For (a) even setting aside her faith * (for which she is so justly commended in the gospel), if she had heard of the destruction of Pharaoh in Egypt, and of the other two kings on the east side of Jordan, the king of Jericho can hardly be supposed to be ignorant of their fate : And therefore it was as natural for her to be terrified at it, and to provide for her safety, as it was for him to make a brave resistance or perish in the attempt. If therefore what the Scripture seems to intimate be true, viz. that Joshua was obliged to offer peace before he made use of the sword against any of the Canaanitish nations, it was as lawful for her, or any other subject, to accept this peace, as it was glorious perhaps for a monarch to refuse it. At least we cannot but think, that the refusal of such advantageous terms from an irresistible conqueror, at the risk of being all infallibly massacred by him, for the sake of a king, who (for ought that appears to the contrary) might be a petty tyrant, or for the sake of a people whom fear had rendered incapable of making any tolerable resistance ; when perhaps the difference of being under the natural monarch (if he was really such) or the conqueror was inconsiderable, or (it may be) on the side of the latter ;—we cannot but think, I say, that such a refusal would have been an instance of patriotism not to be expected from a Canaanite, and much less from such a young hostess as Rahab must have been, since we read of her being the mother of Boaz above thirty years after this. So that, upon the whole, she acted a part that might naturally be expected from her, no ways inglorious in itself, and highly agreeable to the will of God, when she adjoined herself to those who, by his Almighty arm, were so visibly supported, and abandoned the interest of those who, upon so many accounts, were very justly devoted to destruction.

What the Spirit says unto the church at Thyatira, (b) "I gave her space to repent of her fornication, but she repented not ; behold I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation ; and I will kill her children with death, and give unto every one according to his works," is very applicable to the several nations in the land of Canaan. Four hundred years were to intervene between the commencement of the promise to Abraham and this completion of it ; and the reason which God gives for this long delay is, that (c) "the iniquity of the Amorites (and by the Amorites he means all the other nations of Canaan) was not yet full :—" And (d) even though (as the author of the book of Wisdom argues) he could have destroyed them all with one rough word, yet, executing his judgments by little and little, he gave them place of repentance, not being ignorant that they were an haughty generation, and that their malice was bred in them, and their cogitation would never be changed." For instead of reforming, the only effect which this delay had was to make them more confirmed in wickedness, and because (e) "this sentence against their evil works was not speedily executed, therefore were their hearts the fuller set in them to do evil."

What the nature and heinousness of their iniquities were, we may best learn from

(a) *Universal History*, lib. 1. c. 7.

[* This is a foolish observation. If her faith be set aside, her conduct cannot be vindicated ; but why doubt of that faith of which we are assured by an inspired apostle ?]

(b) *Revel. ii. 21, &c.*

(c) *Gen. xv. 16.*

(d) *Wisd. xii. 9, 10.*

(e) *Eccles. viii. 11.*

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(a) the many precautions which God gives his people against them ; “ for he hated them (as the (b) same author has drawn up the articles of accusation against them) for doing most odious works of witchcraft, and wicked sacrifices, for their merciless murdering of children, devouring of man’s flesh, and feasting upon blood ;” and if we may suppose that God, some way or other, had given these nations sufficient notice of his intended severity against them if they did not repent ; had abundant reason to preserve his own people from the infection of the abominations ; and before their extirpation was executed, did, (c) by his servant Joshua, offer them conditions of peace. Though the Divine counsels are a secret to us, yet (even upon this face of things) we cannot find any fault with his treatment of them, since, when he had given them “ space to repent, and they repented not,” his justice was certainly then at liberty to take what vengeance his Divine wisdom should think fit.

And indeed this seems to be one of the reasons why God divided the river for the Israelites, who were to be the instruments of this his vengeance to pass over, viz. that thereby he might inject a terror into the inhabitants of Canaan, and so facilitate the conquest of their country. On the side of Jordan, the kings of the neighbourhood feared no invasion. The depth of the river (especially at the time of its overflowing, which was in the harvest when the Israelites (d) passed it) was barrier sufficient, they thought, against all that the Israelites could do. For in those days pontoons were things never heard of in military expeditions ; and the * stream is (even at this day) allowed to be too fierce and rapid for any one to swim over ; and therefore, as they expected no danger from that quarter, and might for that reason draw out no forces to defend that side of their frontier ; so the sacred historian has taken care to inform us, that (e) “ when all the kings of the Amorites, which were on the side of Jordan westward, and all the kings of the Canaanites, which were by the sea, heard that the Lord had dried up the waters of Jordan from before the children of Israel, until they were passed over, their hearts melted, neither was there spirit in them any more.”

And as this miraculous passage could not but fill their enemies with confusion, so it added, no doubt, fresh courage to the Israelites, when they came to consider, that the same God, about forty years before, had wrought the like miracle for them in their passage of the Red Sea ; that then he divided the waves, (f) to confirm the commission which he had given Moses, and now had parted the stream to strengthen the authority of his successor Joshua, and to give them assurance that (g) “ he would be with the one as he had been with the other,” and empower the latter to make good their possession of the land of promise, even as he had enabled the former to accomplish their deliverance out of the land of bondage.

In all rivers whatever, there questionless are some shallower places than ordinary,

(a) Vid. Lev. xviii. 4. Deut. ix. 4, &c.

(b) Wisd. xii. 4, 5.

(c) Deut. xx. 10, 11. Josh. xi. 19.

(d) Joshua iii. 15. 1 Chron. xii. 15. and Ecclus. xxiv. 26.

* That the Sacred Writings do constantly represent this river as not fordable, except at some particular places, very probably made by art, that the countries on each side may have a freer communication, is plain from the passages to which these several citations—Joshua ii. 2. Judges iii. 28. and xii. 5. 2 Kings ii. 14. do refer. That it was not a poor and inconsiderable stream, such as some have represented it, is evident from the account of Thevenot (in his Travels, p. 193.) who himself went near the place where the Israelites passed over, and describes it to be “ half as broad as the Seine at Paris, very deep

and very rapid ; which agrees very well with what Maundrell (in his Journey from Aleppo, p. 83.) says of it, viz. “ That its channel is twenty yards over, deeper than a man’s height, and runs with such a current, that there is no swimming against it ;” and that (whatever the present condition of Jordan may be) it is certain, when the Israelites came into Canaan, it was a much larger river than now it is, for even in Pliny’s time (Nat. Hist. Lib. v.) its channel was much larger than what it now runs in, having then the title of *Amnis Ambitosus* ; and in the days when Strabo wrote (according to his Geog. lib. xvi.) even vessels of burden might navigate in it. *Shuckford’s Connect.* vol. iii. lib. xii.

(e) Josh. v. 1.

(f) *Saurin’s Dissertation sur le Passage du Jourdain.*

(g) Josh. i. 17.

or some passages, either by boats or bridges, that may be called fords; but that the Jordan at this time was either so vastly overflowed as to render these fords impassable, or that the Israelites crossed it at places which the enemy never thought of, and where none of these passes were to be found, is pretty evident from the Canaanites making no preparation to defend their coasts on the river side, and from the great consternation we find them in when once they understood that the Jewish army had got over. For (whatever opinion we at this distance of time may have of the matter) they justly inferred, that the suspension of a river's course could be effected no other way than by a Divine Power, either immediately acting itself, or by the instrumentality of its angels. And though there possibly may be some instances in history wherein, by the violence of adverse winds, the course of rivers has either been retarded or driven back; yet, as we read of no such wind concerned in this event, the prediction of Joshua, and the promises of God concerning this miracle, the time in which he chose to work it, and the analogy it bears with what before was wrought at the Red Sea; these, and several other circumstances, make this transaction beyond compare, and rank it not only among those prodigies which very rarely come to pass, but among those stupendous works which (contrary to the laws of nature) the great Author and Ruler of the universe, for the preservation of his people, and the manifestation of his own glory, is sometimes observed to do.

From Josh. i.
to the end.

(a) "He that is born in thy house, or he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised, and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant; and the uncircumcised man-child, whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant." These are the words of the precept, and they seem to be so very urgent and express, that one would really think the ordinance was intended not only for a distinction between Jew and Gentile, but for an institution likewise to take away the guilt of original sin. And yet, even upon this supposition, (b) the people's frequent moving from place to place, the uncertainty of their decampments, and the inconvenience of their travelling, which would make it dangerous for children to be circumcised before a march, might be some apology for their omitting the observation of this rite, even though they had no Divine dispensation for it.

(c) It is one of the general rules among the Jews, that no "precept, (always meaning no ceremonial precept, for some precepts there are that were to be observed even at the expence of their lives) whose observation occasions death, is to be attended to, because the Scriptures say, that "he who observeth these laws shall live, not die, by them."

But how frivolous soever this reason may be, it is certain that, in case they apprehended any danger from the operation, they carried this dispensation so far as to exempt the next child from having this ordinance pass upon him, if so be that his brother before him died of the wound which he received in circumcision. And, for a farther excuse, they add, that during their sojourning in the wilderness, for one crime or other, their forefathers were generally under the Divine displeasure, in which condition it would have been a profanation of the sacrament to have administered it.

* Something of this nature seems to have happened in Augustus's time, according to that known passage in Horace:

Vidimus flavum Tiberim, retortis
Littore etrusco violentèr undis,
Ire dejectum monumentum regis.

Templaque Vestæ. Lib. i. Ode ii.

[But granting the truth of this poetical story of the Tiber, and supposing it possible that the waters of Jordan could have been completely kept back by the force of a wind blowing against the course of the

stream; could an immense multitude of men, women, and children, have marched across the course of that wind? If this was impossible, a miracle must be admitted; and surely it is more reasonable to admit the miracle of the sacred writer, who makes no mention of the wind, than another of which we have no evidence.]

(a) Gen. xvii. 13, 14.

(b) Saurin's Dissert. sur la Prise de Jerico.

(c) Lightfoot's Hor. Heb. in 1 Cor. vii. 19.

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But then, if the other notion of this ordinance be admitted, viz. that it was no more than a note of distinction between the Israelites and other nations, as the Israelites were now alone in the wilderness, there was no danger of their mixing with others, and consequently less reason for their observation of this distinguishing rite, until they should enter upon the possession of a country where every kind of idolatry surrounded them on all hands.

Thus, whether we look upon the rite of circumcision as a sacrament of initiation into the Jewish church, or a character of distinction only between them and other people, the Israelites might, without the imputation of much guilt, omit the outward observance of it, if so be that they did but attend to what was the true intent and meaning of it, viz. (a) “the circumcising the foreskin of their hearts; (b) for he is not a Jew (as St Paul excellently argues) who is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart in the spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men but of God.”

In like manner, the observation of the Sabbath day was a precept of severe injunction; but whether the destruction of Jericho happened on that day, or any other of the week, (as the Israelites were ordered to compass the city for seven days successively) it is certain that one of these days must necessarily have been the Sabbath; and yet we must not suppose that they committed any offence in what they did, because the same authority which made the law for the observation of it, gave now a full licence for the profanation of it. The person who met Joshua, and prescribed the form of the siege of Jericho, by his assumption of Divine honours and appellations, was doubtless the same who delivered the law from Mount Sinai; and therefore we need not question but that now he acted in as full power, in suspending, (since his orders could not be executed without such suspension) as he then did in enjoining the observation of the Sabbath; and it is in allusion (as some imagine) to this very passage that our blessed Saviour pronounced that maxim in the gospel, (c) “the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.”

However this be, it is certain that, before our Saviour's days, the Jews carried the observation of the Sabbath to a great degree of rigour. In the time of the Maccabees, they would not so much as defend themselves against the assault of their enemies on that day, (d) but yielded their throats to be cut, rather than stir an hand in their own vindication: whereas this example of their forefathers investing, if not sacking Jericho on the Sabbath day, might have taught them, one would think, that, in cases of this nature, it was allowable not only to defend themselves, but to prevent their enemies annoying them, nay, even to fall upon and destroy them, whenever a favourable opportunity presented itself on that day.

In the conquest of Jericho, however, some have imagined that rams horns were not proper materials whereof to make trumpets; that they are not so easily perforated, nor can they ever be brought to make a sound shrill and extensive enough for their particular purposes; and therefore they conceive that brass, or silver, or any other metal, had been more convenient for this use; whereupon (e) they derive the word *Jobel*, in the singular, (which we render a *ram's horn*) not from the Arabic, which signifies a *ram*, but from *Jubal*, the name of him who was the first inventor of musical instruments; and, according to this sense, the trumpets which the priests upon this occasion used, may be said to have been fashioned “according to those which Jubal first invented.”

This interpretation of the words (which is no bad one) removes all the incongruity

(a) Deut. x. 16.

d) *Prideaux's Connection*, part ii. vol. iv.
and *Calmet* in locum.

(b) Rom. ii. 28, 29.

(c) Mark ii. 27.

(e) *Masius* in Josh. vi. 4. *Bochart's Hieros.* lib. ii. c. 43.

that may seem to arise from the matter, whereof these trumpets were composed; but then it is to be considered, that as the first instruments of this kind were probably made of horns, so has the notion of the impossibility of boring a ram's-horn been sufficiently confuted by our learned Spencer. The truth is, every one knows, that in the inside of it there is a softer part which may be drawn out by art; after which it is hollow all the way up, except four or five inches towards the top, part of which is sawed off, to make it broad enough for the mouth, and then the rest is easily bored *. But whether there is any foundation for that fancy of the Jews, that these horns were retained in the proclamation of some of their greatest festivals, in memory of Isaac's being rescued from his father Abraham's knife by the substitution of a ram in his stead, is a point that we leave to the speculations of the curious.

From Josh. i.
to the end.

Whatever materials these trumpets were made of, it is impossible to conceive that there should be any power in their sound to demolish cities; and though the noise of a great number of people might be very loud, yet still it would require a miracle in Joshua to know, what the just proportion was between their noise and the strength of the walls of Jericho, since the least deviation in this respect would have defeated the whole experiment.

What the effect of gunpowder, or of other sulphureous matter fired under ground, or in the bowels of the earth, is, no one that has seen either the springing of a mine, or felt the convulsions of an earthquake, needs be told; but that no stratagem of this kind could be employed in the siege of Jericho, is manifest, because the invention of gunpowder is a novel thing, nor had the Israelites been long enough on the western side of Jordan to have undermined its walls, even though they had had the secret of some inflammatory stratum to have lodged under them. On the contrary, the whole process of this siege (if we may so call it) was managed at such a rate, as plainly discovered an expectance of a miracle to be wrought; for had not this been the case, instead of sauntering about the walls for seven days, they should have been working in their trenches, and carrying on their approaches, as we now call it.

The art of war was then but in its infancy; and as the manner of undermining and blowing up the most ponderous bodies was what the ancients were unacquainted with, so was the battering-ram an invention of a later date than some imagine. (a) Pliny indeed seems to say, that Epeus first made use of it at the siege of Troy; but, in all probability, (b) Ezekiel is the earliest author that mentions this machine, and perhaps the first time that it was employed was under Nebuchadnezzar at the siege of Jerusalem.

But there is no need to ransack history for the confutation of this system, which (c) they who propose it do nevertheless acknowledge, that though the walls of Jericho might have fallen, without any extraordinary act of the Divine power, yet by the circumstances of the whole account, it appears, that this event was altogether miraculous. Nor should Joshua's denouncing an anathema over the vanquished city be thought a thing unprecedented, or a token of a furious and un placable spirit, since the like practice has been observed by some of the greatest generals of other nations; forasmuch as (d) Agamemnon, after he had taken Troy, denounced a curse upon those who should at any time attempt to rebuild it; the Romans published a decree of execration against them who should do the like to Carthage; and when (e) Crassus had demolished Sidon,

* [All this is very true; but there is not the smallest reason to believe that the trumpets used on this occasion were made of *ram's horns*. The original words, as Bishop Patrick observed long ago, signify the *trumpets made use of at the Jubilee*; they are so translated in the Vulgate; and Parkhurst says expressly,—“ I cannot find that the word יבֵל or יבֵל ever signifies a ram.” The words in Joshua should

be rendered “ the *Jubilee trumpets*, or *Jubilee horns*.”

(a) Lib. vii. c. 56.

(b) Ezek. iv. 1, 2. and xxi. 22.

(c) P. Mersenne, in his Comment. on Genesis, and D. Geo. Merhof. de Scypho Vitreo, per certum humanæ Vocis Tonum fracto.

(d) Strabo, lib. xiii. p. 898.

(e) Zonare Annal. lib. ix. p. 409.

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(which had been a lurking place to the tyrant Glaucias) he wished the greatest evils imaginable upon the head of that man who should but so much as build a wall about the place where it once stood*.

Of all the questions in the Jewish schools, there is none more difficult than what we are to understand by the Urim and Thummim, which Moses takes notice of, as something belonging to the attire of the high priest, and withal enabling him to give responses to such as by his mediation came to consult God. (a) The two words are variously translated; but, in the main, all the translations amount much to the same purport; and as this sacred thing (be it what it will) was to be placed on the high priest's breast, it very properly reminded him of the great qualifications requisite in those of his order; light, or sufficiency of spiritual knowledge; and perfection, or the virtue and sanctity of his life.

The general opinion indeed is,—that this Urim and Thummim were one and the same thing; but (b) an ingenious writer of our own nation conceives them to be two different oracles, and applied to different purposes: that Urim was the oracle whereby God gave answer to those who consulted him in difficult cases, and Thummim, that whereby the high priest knew whether God did accept the sacrifice or no; that therefore the former is called light, as giving knowledge, which dispels the darkness of our minds; and the other integrity or perfection, because they whose sacrifices God accepted, were accounted Thummim, i. e. just and righteous in his sight. In short, that by the former the Jews were ascertained of the counsel or will of God; by the latter, of his favour and good acceptance. But this distinction has not met with a general approbation, because, however there may be (c) passages where the one is mentioned without the other, yet in this case, the one (which is generally the Urim) may well enough be supposed to include both.

The Jewish doctors are mostly of opinion, that the Urim and Thummim were nothing else but the precious stones which were set upon the breast-plate; and that (d) by the shining or protuberating of the letters in the names of the twelve tribes engraven upon the twelve stones, the high priest, when he came to consult God, could read the answer; but in this opinion there are some difficulties hardly to be surmounted. For, besides that all the letters in the Hebrew alphabet are not to be found on the pectoral, since there are four, viz. *Heth*, *Teth*, *Zade*, and *Koph* manifestly wanting; (e) the question is,—By what rules the high priest could make a combination of these letters, (supposing there were enough of them) and so put them together as to spell out the Divine oracle; because it is not pretended that these letters moved out of their places, but only swelled or raised themselves above the rest? Suppose, for instance, that any six of these letters should have swelled or shone with a more than ordinary lustre, yet how should the high priest know to dispose of them in right order, and which should be first, and which last? If it be said—By the spirit of prophecy: this vacates all the ne-

* [All these events were long posterior to the destruction of Jericho, and though they had not, the conduct of Agamemnon or Crassus could have served nothing to the vindication of Joshua. The case appears to have been this,—Jericho was taken and destroyed in so singular a manner, that it seems to have been the wish of the Hebrew leader, approved by God, to preserve a memorial of one of the greatest miracles that were wrought for Israel, by leaving the ruins of the city as a monument, to the latest posterity, of the power of the God of Israel, and his hatred of polytheism, and of such vices as sprang from polytheism, and were practised in Jericho. Accordingly Joshua adjured the elders of the people, or made them bind

themselves by a solemn oath, to leave the ruins of the city, as a perpetual warning to their posterity of the consequences of idolatry and vice; and to give additional sanctity to the oath, he pronounced a curse upon any one of them or their descendants, by whom it should be violated. It was one of the many extraordinary precautions taken to preserve the Israelites from worshipping the idol deities of the surrounding nations.]

(a) *Edwards's Enquiry into difficult Texts*, part ii.

(b) *Mede's Discourse* xxxv.

(c) *Numb.* xxvii. 21. *1 Sam.* xxviii. 6.

(d) *Prideaux's Connection*, part ii. lib. iii.

(e) *Calmet's Dictionary*, under the word *Urim*.

cessity of the Urim and Thummim ; because a prophetic spirit would teach him what he desired to know, without any farther assistance.

From Josh. i.
to the end.

(a) Christophorus a Castro, and from him (b) Dr Spencer, will needs have it, that this Urim and Thummim were two little images (much of the same make with the Gentile teraphim), which, being folded in the doubling of the breast-plate, did from thence give oracular answers by an audible voice, and that this device was taken from the Egyptians. But, besides that the word teraphim (to which these others were compared) is seldom or never taken in a good sense, it seems a little improbable that, in a matter so solemn and sacred, the Jews should be left to follow the example of the idolatrous Egyptians. (c) The Sacred Records indeed inform us, that the Jews borrowed of the Egyptians jewels of silver, and gold, and raiment ; but they nowhere intimate that the Jewish high priest borrowed his pontifical, and particularly his oracular, habit from them : And therefore to think that God, who declares himself so positively against the idolatrous practice of the Gentiles, should, by these images of Pagan invention, take the ready way to give them countenance and encouragement, or to think that the Jews, who were expressly commanded not to “ learn the way of the heathen ; and (d) after the doings of the land of Egypt, where they had dwelt, not to do ;” were permitted, nay, commanded to make use of this magical and superstitious rite, is such an heap of odd and wild conceits, as no unprejudiced mind can ever entertain.

Others therefore are of opinion, that it was the tetragrammaton, or ineffable name of God ; and others, that it was no more than two plain words *Urim* and *Thummim* written or engraven on some plate of gold or precious stones, which, when placed upon the pectoral, would give it an oracular power : (e) But the most probable opinion is, that it was no corporeal thing at all, but only a certain virtue (which God was pleased to give to the breast-plate at its consecration) of obtaining an oracular answer from him, whenever the high priest should put it on in order to ask counsel of him in the manner that he had appointed ; and that the names of Urim and Thummim were given it, only to denote the clearness and perspicuity which those answers of God had, viz. that they were not like the heathen oracles, enigmatical and ambiguous, but plain and manifest, and such as never fell short of perfection, either in the fulness of the answer, or the certainty of the truth of it.

Whether this oracle was only consulted in the great and important affairs of the state, or might be advised with in questions of a lower nature, is not entirely determined by the learned ; but the most prevailing opinion is, that the high priest (who was the only officiating minister in this ceremony) was not allowed to address it for any private person, but only for the king, the president of the sanhedrim, the general of the army, or some other public governor in Israel ; and that, not upon any private affairs, but such only as related to the public interest of the nation, whether in church or state.

When therefore any such matter happened, wherein it was necessary to consult God, the custom was for the high priest to put on his robes and breast-plate, and so present himself, not within the veil of the holy of holies, (for thither he never entered but once a year, on the great day of expiation), but without the veil in the holy place, and there standing with his face directly towards the ark or mercy-seat, whereon the Divine presence rested, he propounded the matter ; and, at some distance behind him, but without the holy place, stood the person, for whom the oracle was consulted, in devout expectation of the answer, which (as (f) it seems most congruous to the thing) was given him in an audible voice from the mercy-seat, which was within behind the veil.

Here it was that Moses went to ask counsel of God in all cases ; and from hence he was answered in an audible voice : And, in like manner, whenever the high priest pre

(a) *De Vatinio.*
(d) Levit. xviii. 3.

(b) *Dissert. de Urim et Thummim.*
(e) *Prideaux's Connection*, part i. lib. 3.

(c) *Edwards's Enquiry*, part ii.
(f) *Ibid.*

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sented himself before God, according to the prescription of the Divine law, it is reasonable to believe that God gave him an answer in the same way that he did Moses, i. e. by an audible voice from the mercy-seat: And for this reason it is, that such address for council is called "enquiring at the mouth of God;" and the holy of holies (the place where the mercy-seat stood, and from which the answer was given) is so often in Scripture styled (a) the oracle, because from thence were the oracles of God delivered to such as came to ask counsel of him.

* Such was the standing oracle which the Israelites might have had recourse to upon all important occasions; and if, in their league with the Gibeonites, they were too hasty and precipitate, their unadvisedness is only to be blamed, and not the insufficiency of that means which God had appointed for their better information. The short of the matter is, the pretended foreign ambassadors drew them in by a wile and artifice. The story of their old shoes and mouldy bread was so well contrived, and seemed so very plausible, that they took the thing for granted, as we say. (b) "They took of their victuals" (as the text expresses it), or received them, without any farther enquiry, upon the account of the staleness of their provision, and (c) "asked not counsel of the mouth of the Lord;" and therefore no wonder that God should suffer them to be outwitted, when they had an infallible Director so near at hand, and yet in a matter of such moment as that of entering into a national treaty, never once bethought themselves to consult him.

But there was a greater error in their conduct with relation to the Gibeonites. The orders and directions which God gave them, when they entered into a state of war, were to this effect.—(d) That to all cities which upon their summons surrendered to them, they were to give quarter; to save their lives, but at the same time to make them their slaves and tributaries; but that to such as slighted their summons and stood upon their defence, they were not to use the same treatment. If they were a distant nation, or not belonging to the country of Canaan, upon their taking any place they were to put the men only to the sword, sparing the women and children and other living creatures that were found in it; but if they were a neighbouring or Canaanitish state, that stood out and resisted, they were to destroy all without exception, and save alive nothing that breathed. In the whole, however, there was this injunction, that of what country soever the people were, and whether they resisted or resisted not, the Israelites were to make no (e) "covenant with them nor with their gods;" and the reason hereof is this—(f) That as a league between two nations implies, in the very notion of it, their having upon some terms given their faith to each other, to observe punctually

(a) Exod xxv. 18. 20. chap. xxxvii. 6. Lev. xvi. 2. 1 Kings vi. 5, &c. 2. Chron. iii. 16. chap. iv. 20, &c. Psal. xxviii. 2.

* The Jewish doctors think that the custom of consulting God by Urim and Thummim continued no longer than under the tabernacle: For it is a maxim among them, that the Holy Spirit spake to the children of Israel by Urim and Thummim, while the tabernacle lasted, under the first temple, i. e. the temple of Solomon, by the prophets; and under the second temple, or after the captivity of Babylon, by the *bath-col*, or *daughter of the voice*, by which they mean a voice sent from heaven, such as was heard at our Saviour's baptism and transfiguration, Matth. iii. 17. Our learned Spencer seems to have adopted this opinion, and endeavours to support it by these arguments, viz. That the Urim and Thummim were a consequence of the theocracy of the Hebrews; for, while the Lord immediately governed his people, it

was necessary that there should always be a means at hand, whereby to consult him upon affairs that concerned the common interest of the whole nation; but since the theocracy ceased, when the kingdom became hereditary in the person and family of Solomon, and the interest of the nation ceased to be common, after the division of Israel into two monarchies, the oracles of the Urim and Thummim must necessarily cease. And accordingly, if we consult the Sacred History, we shall meet with no footsteps of thus applying to God, from the building of Solomon's temple to the time of its destruction; and after its destruction, all are agreed that this oracle was never restored again. *Spencer de Urim et Thummim*, cap. 2. [But see Answer to the Objection, chap. iii. of this book.]

(b) Josh. ix. 14.

(c) Ibid.

(d) Deut. xx. 12, &c.

(e) Exod. xxiii. 32.

(f) *Shuckford's Connection*, vol. iii. lib. 12.

what had been stipulated between them ; and as, when such public faith was given and taken, the parties to the treaty swore solemnly to each other by their respective gods ; the Israelites, who looked upon the gods of these nations as vanity and nothing, who were obliged to (a) “ overthrow their altars, burn their groves, hew down their images,” and utterly extirpate their religion, were totally debarred from entering into any treaty or alliance with them, because they could not recognise their idols as gods, nor take any public faith from the worshippers of them. For so the people seem to say to the Gibeonites at their first coming into the camp to propose a treaty, “ peradventure you dwell among us,” ‘ are some of those neighbouring nations whom we are ordered to destroy, whose gods we are to drive out, and whose country we are come to take possession of,’ “ and how shall we make a league with you ?” ‘ The interdiction we are under will not permit us ; and therefore if you pretend to impose upon us in this matter, the covenant of course is null and invalid ; and so in reality it was.’

From Josh. i.
to the end.

It is reasonable however to imagine, that, after the fraud of the Gibeonites was discovered, the princes of Israel might reflect upon their neglect in not consulting the Divine oracle before ; and, as the peace which they had entered into was plainly repugnant to God’s command of exterminating all the Canaanites, the question was, what they should do in this case, whether abide by the treaty, and so postpone the command ? or execute the command, and so disannul the treaty ? The whole stress of the question turns upon this—(b) Whether God commanded the Israelites to destroy all the people of Canaan absolutely, and without exception ? or whether he allowed them to spare such as voluntarily submitted themselves, and came to implore their pity and protection ? The words of the injunction in this case are full and express enough ; (c) “ When thou goest nigh unto a city to fight against it, then proclaim peace unto it ; and if it make thee answer of peace, and open unto thee, then shall all the people that are found therein be tributaries to thee, and shall serve thee.—Thus shalt thou do unto all the cities which are very far off from thee, and which are not of these Canaanitish nations. But of the cities of these people which the Lord thy God doth give thee for an inheritance, thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth, but shall utterly destroy them, that they teach thee not to do all their abominations which they have done to their gods.” But here some great writers have observed, that this utter extinction of the Canaanitish nations, considering the reasons that are given for it both here and (d) elsewhere, is to be looked upon (e) as a permission rather than a positive command, and should, at least, (f) be understood with this limitation, “ unless they immediately submitted, renounced their idolatry, and did every thing that was enjoined them.” And to this purpose (g) the Jews have a tradition, that Joshua, before he declared war against the seven nations, wrote letters to them, wherein he offered them three conditions—That, if they were minded to depart, they should quit the country immediately ; if they were desirous to make peace, they should come and treat with the Israelites ; but, that if they intended to fight it out, they might betake themselves to their arms : And they farther add, that the first of these conditions the Girgashites embraced, and fled into Egypt ; the second the Gibeonites accepted, and made a league with Joshua ; and the third the confederate kings made their choice, when they took up arms against the Israelites and were all defeated.

But this is no more than a bare hypothesis, invented on purpose to solve the difficulty, and seems not to have near so good a foundation as that which supposes that the princes of Israel, remembering their former omission and their insecurity in acting upon their own bottom, might, in this perplexity, have recourse to God for advice, and that

(a) Deut. xii. 3.

(b) *Puffendorf*, de Jure Gent. lib. iv. cap. 2. sect. 7. de Juramentis, &c.

(c) Deut. xx. 10, &c.

(d) Exod. xxiii. 33. and Deut. vii. 4.

(e) *Puffendorf*, *ibid.*

(f) *Grotius*, de Jure Belli, lib. ii. cap. 13.

(g) *Saurin’s* Dissert. sur l’Artifice des Gabaonites, vol. iii.

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his answer might be, "that the league should be ratified." Of this indeed we have no express mention in Scripture; but in so short a history of such a variety of transactions as that of Joshua is, we may well imagine that several circumstances may be omitted. For that some such ratification of this treaty was determined by God, we have great presumption to believe, (a) from the severe punishment which he afterwards inflicted upon the Israelites and the posterity of Saul, for his having slain some of the descendants of these Gibeonites, (not improbably (b) at the sacking of the town of Nob). For though this action of Saul's was cruel and inhumane, because the decree for the extirpation of the Canaanites was now extinct; yet, what made it more heinous and provoking to God, was the infraction of the treaty, which had subsisted about four ages, and which cost the lives of seven of that bloody prince's sons and grandsons to atone.

The heathens, it must be owned, had no small respect and veneration for oaths; whenever they took one, it was in the most solemn and religious manner. (c) They looked upon the gods as inspectors and witnesses of what they said, more especially at such a time as this. They believed that the furies were appointed to be avengers of all perjury; and that as (d) disgrace attended it in this world, so destruction would pursue it in the next. And as this was the general notion of most heathen nations, so the Gibeonites, who had hitherto conceived a good opinion of the God of Israel, would have been strangely scandalised, † had they found his people prevaricating with their oaths, even though they were made upon a false supposition. For fear, therefore, lest any dishonour should fall ultimately upon that Divine Majesty whose servants they were, the princes of the congregation unanimously agree, (and there seems to be something of a Divine inspiration in this their unanimity), and declare it as their joint opinion, (e) "We have sworn unto them by the Lord God of Israel," and therefore, without breaking our oath, or forfeiting his favour, "we may not touch them."

It was the same commendable zeal for the honour of God, that made the Israelites, on one side of Jordan, conceive such angry resentments against their brethren on the other, upon suspicion that they had apostatised from his worship into the idolatry of the nations that were round about them. The two tribes and an half, upon their return from the wars, erected an altar, in memory of their relation to the tribes and tabernacle which they had left behind them (f). This altar, it seems, was of an height somewhat extraordinary; and as it was the custom for heathens to worship their gods (which were generally celestial bodies) upon high places, as presuming that thereby they made nearer approaches to them, their brethren on the west side of the river, conjectured from thence, that this was an altar raised for the worship of the sun, or some other planetary god. But if even they were mistaken in that conjecture, sufficient reason they had to suspect, that it was intended for no good purpose, since God had expressly forbidden them to offer their sacrifices at any other place but the tabernacle, or upon any other altar but that which was built by his appointment: For these are directions which Moses gives them; (g) "Ye are not yet come to the rest, and to the inheritance which the Lord your God giveth you:" But when ye shall be put in possession of it, "ye shall not do after all these things, that we do here this day, every man whatsoever is right in his own eyes, but in the place which the Lord shall chuse, in one of

(a) 2 Sam. xxi. 1, &c.

(b) 1 Sam. xxii. 19.

(c) Vid. Hesiod. Dies, ver. 38, &c.

(d) Perjurii Pœna Divina Exitium, Humana De-
decus. Cic. de Leg. lib. ii.

† St Ambrose, treating of this story, speaks of it in this manner:—"Joshua did not think fit to break the peace which he had granted, because it was confirm-

ed with the awful solemnity of an oath, lest, whilst he was blaming the perfidiousness of others, he himself should be worse than his word, and forfeit his own honour." *De Officiis*, lib. iii. cap. 10.

(e) Josh. ix. 19.

(f) Saurin's Dissert. Josue renvoie les Reub.

(g) Deut. xii. 9, 8, 14.

thy tribes, there shalt thou offer thy burnt-offerings; thither shalt thou come, and there shalt thou do all that I command thee." From Josh. i. to the end.

Now when they had sufficient reason, as they thought, to suspect their brethren of a defection into idolatry, what should they do? Why, herein they punctually follow the rules which God himself had prescribed them in such a case. (a) "If thou shalt hear say, in one of thy cities which the Lord thy God hath given thee to dwell there, saying, certain men, the children of Belial, are gone out from among you, and have withdrawn the inhabitants of their city, saying, let us go, and serve other gods, (which ye have not known), then shalt thou enquire, and make search, and ask diligently; and behold, if it be truth, and the thing certain, that such abomination is wrought among you, thou shalt surely smite the inhabitants of that city with the edge of the sword; destroying it utterly, and all that is therein, and the cattle thereof, with the edge of the sword; and thou shalt gather all the spoil of it into the midst of the street thereof, and shalt burn with fire the city and all the spoil thereof every whit, for the Lord thy God; and it shall be an heap for ever, it shall not be built again." And if the Israelites on the west of Jordan, having this cause of suspicion, pursued these orders to a title, who shall say that they did amiss, or that their zeal for God's glory was rash and precipitate? They took the properest method (which was sending an embassy) for the discovery of the truth; and if, upon enquiry, their fears were found to be groundless, yet it seems to be an error on the better side (as we commonly say), and an instance of no contemptible prudence, in matters of so dangerous a consequence, always to suspect the worst.

It may be doubted perhaps, whether the Israelites were a people of the greatest bravery in the world, but it may truly be said, that there was no necessity for their being so; because upon all occasions they had the Lord of Hosts to protect them, and to fight their battles for them. Supported by his aid, (b) "how did one of them chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight, except their rock had sold them, and the Lord had shut them up?" But when this was the case, no wonder at all that (c) "the hearts of the people melted away, and became like water."

The short of the story was this:—They had all along hitherto been victorious; had subdued a country beyond Jordan; passed that river, and conquered the capital of the adjacent province by miracle: And now having sent out a party to summon a small place to surrender, upon the first sally that the inhabitants make, they are all on a sudden seized with a panic, forget their courage, and flee, without so much as striking a stroke. This they could not but perceive was the effect of God's displeasure; and therefore, considering themselves in an enemy's country, they had just reason to dread, that if God should desert them in this situation of their affairs, the people of the land, hearing the report of their defeat, would come, and (as Joshua expresses it) (d) "environ them round, and cut off their name from the earth."

Good reason therefore had the Israelites to be disconsolate, when they found that God, to whom they owed all their valour and victories, had forsaken them. But in the mean time, how did they behave upon this occasion? Why, "they fell to the earth upon their knees," in humble supplication to God for mercy; they continued all the day long in fasting and praying, and expressed their sorrow, and the sense of their unworthiness with the usual tokens of grief; and was not this better, than to become obdurate under God's afflicting hand, as were the Egyptians? Nay, was not this the very behaviour by which the Ninevites afterwards moved the Divine mercy to reverse the sentence of excision that had gone out against them? So that all things considered, the Israelites in this regard are not to be blamed; since they who had lost the "rock of their might,

(a) Deut. xiii. 12, 13, &c.

(b) Chap. xxxii. 30.

(c) Josh. vii. 5.

(d) Ibid. vii. 9.

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and had the terrors of the Lord set in array against them, were far from fearing where no fear was."

And in like manner, if to the reasons we have already alleged for their conduct at Jericho, we add this one consideration, viz. that they were just now entering upon their conquests; that this was the first city they had taken on the west side of Jordan; and that the people they had to contend with, were to be terrified into submission rather than entreated; we cannot but be of this opinion, that an example or two of high severity, at the first setting out, was no less than necessary to reduce the country more speedily, and with a less effusion of blood, as well as to verify the promise of him who appointed them: (a) "This day will I begin to put the dread of thee, and the fear of thee, upon the nations that are under the whole heaven, who shall hear report of thee, and shall tremble, and be in anguish because of thee."

Without entering therefore into any farther vindication of the Jewish nation, we may safely say, that in the cases we have had under consideration, they were neither zealous, nor timorous, nor cruel without a cause; that in the first of these cases, they expressed their concern for God's honour; in the second, their dread of his departing from them; and in the third, their obedience to his command.

It is a law of God's own enacting, that (b) "the fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers, but every man shall be put to death for his own sin." But then we are to consider, that this law was given to man and not to God, who has certainly a more absolute right and sovereignty over men than one man has over another. That as the Israelites at this time lived under a theocracy, and in a proper sense had God for their civil governor, every wilful transgression (such as Achan's was) must have been deemed not only a violation of the Divine command, but a crime of *lese majesty* likewise; and that, in crimes of this kind, the practice of all * governments, ancient as well as modern, has been to make children suffer for the iniquity of the parent (as in cases of attain of blood and confiscation of estate), and that with the reputation of the highest equity. Upon the supposition, then, that Achan's family were not accessory to their father's crime, yet God, who gave them life, had undoubtedly a full power to take it away, at what time or in what manner he thought fit; and if, in cases of high treason among men, it is thought reasonable to devolve some part of the parents penalty upon the children, there is this farther argument why Achan's family should be made to suffer with him, because God could not express his severity against sin, nor take their lives away, at a more convenient opportunity than in the beginning of a new empire, and when each man's right and property was going to be settled; that such a dreadful example of his indignation against stealth might deter others, if not for their own at least for their dear children's sake, to abstain from such dangerous and pernicious practices. (c) The Jews have a maxim, "that he who is an accomplice in any crime, is as culpable as the person who commits it;" and therefore, if we suppose that Achan's family was privy to what their father had done, and did conceal it, there could be no injustice in including them in the punishment. It may be pretended, perhaps, that some of them were infants, and so must be deemed innocent; but the text says nothing of this: It only calls them (d) sons and daughters; and, considering that Achan in all probability was an old man, (e) as being

(a) Deut. ii. 25. (b) Deut. xxiv. 16.

* Thus Cicero, to excuse the confiscations decreed against Lepidus, which affected his children, the nephews of Brutus, has these words—"Neque vero me fugit, quam sit acerbum, parentum scelera filiorum pœnis lui: Sed hoc præclare legibus comparatum est, ut charitas liberorum amiciores parentes reipublicæ

redderet." Ad Brutum, liber. 1. epist. 12: And again,—“In quâ videtur illud esse crudele, quod ad liberos, qui nihil meruerunt, pœna pervenit; sed et id antiquum est, et omnium civitatum. Ep. 15. Warburton's Divine Legation, lib. 5. sect. 5. Note HH.

(c) Saurin's Dissert. sur le Crime, &c. de Achan.

(d) Josh. vii. 24.

(e) Ibid. ver. 1.

the fifth descendant from Judah, it seems most likely that his children (a) were grown up, and so capable of knowing, and of either concealing or discovering the fact. From Josh. i. to the end.

But, after all, there is no occasion for our running ourselves into any difficulty. The text does not say, neither is it any way implied, that Achan's sons and daughters were executed with him. In the sentence denounced against him, we find no mention made of them; and why then should we suppose that they were partakers in his punishment, any otherwise than as they were brought out to be spectators of it *? And a piercing sight, no doubt, it was, for persons so nearly related to behold the sad fate of their chief, first stoned to death, and then, with all his goods and chattels, as well as those accursed things for which he was condemned, committed to the flames. His oxen, and asses, and sheep, are here taken notice of, to let us see that Achan was a wealthy man, and therefore inexcusable in committing this fact: And though they were not capable of sin, nor consequently of punishment, properly so called; yet, as they were made for man's use, they might fairly die for his instruction, viz. to convince him of the sad and contagious nature of sin, which even involves innocent creatures in its plagues; and emblematically to shew him how much sorer punishments are reserved for man, who, having a law given for the conduct of his life, and the gifts of reason and will to restrain him from the transgression of it, will adventure upon things forbidden, and thereby contract greater guilt, and draw upon himself severer expressions of the Divine wrath.

God indeed styles himself "The Lord of Hosts," and had so immediate an hand in the conduct of Israel, that every military achievement of theirs might very properly be ascribed to him: But when he ordered "Joshua (b) to go up against Ai, and to lay an ambuscade behind it," he might, notwithstanding this, leave the whole glory of the invention and execution of it to him as an able and expert general; for if he had always wrought miracles in favour of his people, and left nothing for Joshua to perform, we cannot see how he could have merited the character of an extraordinary man.

In other events, where the whole may be said to be under the guidance of God, he takes care to direct every particular of the transaction. In passing the river Jordan, and surrounding the walls of Jericho, he prescribes the form and order of the people's march, and how, upon every occasion, they were to behave; but here, in the affair of Ai, he contents himself with merely suggesting the means, as things that Joshua was no stranger to, and leaves to him the contrivance and application of them. This stratagem indeed is the first that we find any mention of in Scripture; but we must not from thence infer, that there was never any before put in execution. The art of war began very soon, and was carried on, no doubt, with great application. The whole excellence of its management consists in circumventing and doubling upon the enemy with dexterity; and therefore no question but that the wits of mankind were always employed in taking the advantage of each other, and in gaining a victory with the least expence of blood on their own side. (c) The Romans fell frequently into the snares which were laid for them, because their generals were men of no military skill; and therefore, to excuse their ignorance, they alleged, that they made war like honest men without deceit or artifice: And if Alexander disclaimed the use of stratagems, it was because he knew the cowardice of his enemies, and how easy a matter it was to gain a conquest in the fair and open field. For it is not to be doubted but that, had he been to attack any other nation except the effeminate Persians, he would have taken his friend Parmenio's advice, and (without blushing at a victory obtained by good management) fallen upon his enemy under the cover of the night.

However this be, that stratagems are lawful in war, we have good presumption to

(a) *Pool's Annotations.* * [This was undoubtedly the real state of the case: Achan's children were neither stoned nor burnt with him. See *Patrick's Commentary* and the works there referred to.]

(b) Josh. viii. 2.

(c) *Calmet's Dictionary* under the word *Ai*.

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think, from God's directing Joshua to make use of one; and though he does not (as other warriors do) employ any of these at a pinch, or because he cannot accomplish his designs without them; though he could, with one single act of his will, have destroyed the city of Ai and all the inhabitants thereof, and, without suffering his people to strike one blow, have put them in possession of the promised land; yet, choosing to act by secondary means, he proceeded in the ordinary way, and, leaving a good deal to Joshua's skill and management, assisted him only at some critical conjunctures, that, by a prolongation of the war, the reputation of his people might be raised, and more frequent opportunities occur for the display of his miraculous works.

(a) Josephus indeed seems not to have consulted the honour of Joshua much, when he ascribes the delay of the conquest of Canaan to the weakness of his army, and the impregnable strength of the places he was to attack: But (b) some other Jews make the matter much worse, when they tell us, that he desired to prolong the war, not only to retain the office and dignity of being captain-general, but because he was informed by the oracle, that as soon as the conquest was finished he himself was to die. God however seems to have given us much better reasons for this retardation, when he acquaints Moses with his intention: (c) "I will not drive the Canaanites out from before thee in one year, lest the land become desolate, and the beasts of the field multiply against thee;" and when he complains of their sad defection after the death of Joshua, (d) "I will not henceforth drive out any from before them of the nations which Joshua left when he died, that through them I may prove Israel, whether they will keep the way of the Lord, to walk therein, as their fathers did keep it, or no:" Whereupon the historian tells us, that God accordingly "did leave these nations without driving them out;" and adds another reason for their continuance in the country, viz. that the Israelites, by having an enemy to contend with, might be trained up in the art and mystery of war: For (e) "these are the nations, says he, which the Lord left to prove Israel, that by them they might teach those war who before knew nothing of it." So that here are three reasons given us why God delayed the entire subjection of Canaan; viz. because the children of Israel were as yet too few in number to replenish the whole country; because God, by keeping the Canaanites in being, was willing both to make trial of his people's obedience, and to train them and their posterity for some ages up in military discipline and exercise.

But there is another reason which Joshua, in his dying speech, assigns for their not enlarging their conquests to the utmost bounds which God had given them: (f) "Take good heed therefore, says he, unto yourselves, that ye love the Lord your God; else, if you do in any wise go back, and cleave unto the remnant of these nations, even these that remain among you, and shall make marriages with them, and go in unto them, and they to you; know for a certainty, that the Lord your God will no more drive out any of these nations from before you."

So that the promise which God made to the Israelites was conditional; and as they manifestly falsified their part of the obligation, by engaging first in affinity, and then in idolatry, with the nations which they were bound to destroy; so God might very well think himself released from his, and under no farther concern for their success, or the enlargement of their conquest; (g) but as they had been the ministers of his vengeance, in punishing the disorders of the Canaanites, they, in their turn, were now made the instruments of his chastising the disobedience of his own people: (h) "They shall be snares and traps to you, and scourges in your sides, and thorns in your eyes, until ye perish from the good land which the Lord your God hath given you."

(a) *Antiq. lib. v. c. i.*

(b) *Vid. Schotun. Biblioth. Vet. et Nov. Test. vol. ii. p. 402.*

(c) *Exod.*

xxiii. 29, 30.

(d) *Judg. ii. 21, 22.*

(e) *Ibid. iii. 1, 2.*

(f) *Josh. xxiii. 11, &c.*

(g) *Saurin's Dissert. vol. iii. Dissert. x.*

(h) *Josh. xxiii. 13.*

And indeed if we consider how violently, in after-ages, the Israelites were oppressed by their enemies, and by many battles and captivities, harassed and diminished in their numbers, we shall find no necessity of enlarging their possessions; because the country, which they conquered in the first six years, was spacious enough to contain them. (a) The promise, however, which God made, was sufficiently accomplished in the reigns of David and Solomon, when the kingdom of Israel was in its zenith; and though its territories did not extend to the Euphrates, yet its dominion did, since all that tract of land between Jerusalem and that great river was either subdued or made tributary to them.

From Josh. i.
to the end.

Upon the whole therefore, it is evident, that the author of the book of Joshua, (be he who he will) in the three instances which we have been considering, has left no imputation upon God; forasmuch as though he commanded Achan to be put to death, yet it does not appear that his children suffered with him; or if they did, there is presumption to believe that they were accomplices in his crime: Though he ordered the taking of Ai by a stratagem, yet the whole form and contrivance of it he left to the general; and though the Israelites did not actually possess all that he had promised them, yet this was occasioned by their own disobedience and cowardice, and the falsification of those conditions upon which the full conquest of the land of Canaan was suspended.

There is but one objection more, in the course of this period, which is usually alleged against the Sacred History, and that is, the seeming contradiction of the ark's being said to be at Shechem, when it was, in reality, at Shiloh: But, in answer to this, some have imagined, that, as Joshua was now grown old and infirm, the ark, (b) upon this occasion, was removed from Shiloh, the settled place of the Divine residence, to Shechem, the place of Joshua's habitation, that he might with greater solemnity, and in the presence of God, (whereof the ark was the proper emblem) deliver his charge to the people. But other learned men have observed, that (c) "by the sanctuary of the Lord," we are to understand, not the ark of the covenant, but only some certain place of religious worship, such, very probably, as the Jewish oratories were. That the holy ark was not, on this occasion, set up here at Shechem, is evident, they say, from that prohibition given by God, (d) "Thou shalt not plant a grove of any trees, near unto the altar of the Lord thy God, which thou shalt make thee, neither shalt thou set up a pillar which the Lord thy God hateth:" Whereas, in this sanctuary, we read both of an oak planted, and a pillar or statue erected under it; which is certainly such a violation of the Divine command, as Joshua upon no occasion can be supposed capable of incurring. (e) It is a very probable opinion therefore, that the place where Joshua set up this monumental pillar, was one of those which the tribe of Ephraim (to whom Shechem belonged) had consecrated and set apart for a proseucha, or a place to assemble in for public prayer; and that they made choice of this, rather than any other, to perform their devotions in, because it was that particular spot where God appeared to Abraham, and promised his posterity the possession of the land of Canaan.

* That there were such oratories, or places of public prayer, among the Jews, and

(a) *Pool's* Annotations.

(b) *Pool's* Annot. and *Patrick's* Comment.

(c) Josh. xxiv. 26. (d) Deut. xvi. 21, 22.

(e) *Mede's* Discourse xviii.

* Epiphanius, who was a Jew bred, and born in Palestine, speaking of some heretics, (lib. i. Hæres. 61.) whom he calls Massalians, and who, according to his account, were neither Jews, Christians, nor Samaritans, but Pagans, tells us, that they, nevertheless, pretended to worship the one true God, and for that purpose had certain open places which they called proseuchæ. And that the Jews (as also the Samari-

tans) had places for religious worship of the same denomination, he proves from the Acts of the Apostles, (chap. xvi. 13.) where Lydia is said to have met St Paul, and to have heard him preach in that place, which ἰδοὺ τόπος προσευχῆς εἶναι, seemed to be a place of prayer. There is also at Shechem, (which is now called Neapolis) continues he, about a mile without the city, a proseucha, a place of prayer, like a theatre, which was built in the open air, and without a roof, by the Samaritans, who affected to imitate the Jews in all things. Juvenal, in his 3d satire, describing the manner in which some wild young fellows

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1608.

that they were generally beset or shaded with trees, is evident from such a variety of testimonies, that it can hardly be contested; but whether they were of so early a date as Joshua's time, or not rather introduced after the captivity of Babylon, is a question not easy to determine. In the main, however, we may conclude, that whether the ark of the covenant was occasionally brought to Shechem, or at Shechem there happened to be such an oratory, as, in after-ages, became frequent in Judea, there can be no incongruity in the sacred penman's saying, that the sanctuary of the Lord (since either the ark or the oratory might merit that name) was at Shechem. There is another solution however of this difficulty, which ought not to be disregarded. (a) Shechem and Shiloh were about twelve miles distant from each other, and in the mid-way between them was Timnah-Serah, the place where Joshua lived. Since therefore the text informs us, that (b) "he gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem, and called for their elders, for their heads, for their judges, and for their officers, and they presented themselves before God;" we may reasonably suppose, that though all the people met at Shechem, yet their elders and chief officers only presented themselves before God. That so great a multitude could not meet together, and encamp in any place, but where there is a proportionable compass of ground, is a matter self-evident; and that, in the confines of Shechem, there was a large and open country, extending perhaps as far as Shiloh, and very commodious for their reception, we have the attestation of holy writ. But then, since it is impossible for one man to speak to such a number of people and be heard, Joshua, very probably, singled out the chief and principal of them, such as he foresaw would succeed him in the government after his demise, and these he took with him to Shiloh, a place in the neighbourhood, where was the ark or sanctuary of the Lord, that he might there with the greater solemnity give them his final charge, which they, in their turns, might deliver to their respective tribes.

Thus we have endeavoured to satisfy the several objections which are usually made against some passages in the Sacred History during the government of Joshua. And if

were wont in their drunken frolics to affront and abuse every poor man they met in the streets in the night-time, brings them in speaking thus:

Ede, ubi consistas, in qua te quæro proseucha?

Sat. iii.

Whereby he either intimates, that he was some poor wretch who dwelt in an house, that could not keep out wind and weather, but like the Jewish *proseuchæ*, was all open above; or he alludes to the state of the Jews at that time, who were banished out of Rome by Domitian, and had no place of shelter, but their oratories which were without the walls of the city. For that the Jews had their *proseuchæ* about the city of Rome is evident from that passage in Philo, (de Legatione ad Caium) wherein he commends the clemency and moderation of Julius Cæsar, who knew that the Jews had such places of public worship, where they always assembled on the sabbath day, and yet gave them no molestation, as Caius had done. Josephus (in his life, sect. 54.) makes mention of a *proseucha* at Tiberias in Galilee; and in several places in the New Testament, the same term is made use of in the same signification. Vid. *Mede's Discourse* 18. But then the question is, whether it be not a mistake in some learned men, to apply an usage that is mentioned at such and such a time, to a people who lived many ages before?

Philo Judæus, (de Legat. ad Caium) speaking of the barbarous outrage of some Gentiles against the

Jews, dwelling then at Alexandria, acquaints us, that of some of their *proseuchæ*, they cut down the trees, and others they demolished to the very foundations. The poet Juvenal alludes to the very same custom of having trees planted where the Jewish oratories were, when speaking of a fortune-teller of that nation, he thus describes her:

Arcanum Judæa tremens mendicat in aurem,
Interpres legum Solymarum, magna sacerdos
Arboris, & summi fida internuncia coeli.

Sat. vi.

And in another place, complaining, that through the corruption of the times, the once sacred grove of Capena, which had formerly been the habitation of the muses, and the place where Numa was wont to meet the goddess Ægeria, was now let out to the beggarly Jews for a *proseucha*, his expressions are these:

Hic, ubi nocturnæ Numa constituebat amicæ,
Nunc, sacra fontis nemus, & delubra locantur
Judeis; quorum Cophinus, fœnumque supellex.
Omnis enim populo mercedem pendere jussa est
Arbor, & ejectis mendicat Sylva Camænis.

Sat. iii.

For it is hard to conceive, what affinity there should be between Jews and trees, unless it be from the custom that their oratories were usually shaded with them.

(a) *Shuckford's Connection*, vol. iii. lib. xii.
(b) Josh. xxiv. 1.

profane testimonies would be of any force, we might produce the accounts which their historians give us of Neptune's drying up the river Inachus, and of Agamemnon's denouncing a curse against any one that should repair Troy, to justify the narrative we have in Scripture of the miraculous passage of Jordan, and the resentment and indignation which Joshua conceived against Jericho. The ancient Hercules was certainly the same with Joshua. He is said to have waged war in behalf of the gods against Typhœus, and the rest of the giants of old, even as Joshua fought the battles of the Lord against the inhabitants of Canaan, men of a vast stature, and, at that time, under the displeasure of heaven. In conformity to the sacred record of God's destroying the confederate army of the Amorites with hail-stones, the ancient heathens say, that Hercules was thus assisted in his war against the sons of Neptune; and Plutarch, in his life of Timoleon, tells us, that a terrible storm of hail, in the face of the Carthaginian army, gave him (though he had but very few forces to encounter them) a complete victory over them. The sun's standing still is no new story: Callimachus (*a*) represents him as stopping the wheels of his chariot to hear the melody of a chorus of nymphs, wherewith he was so delighted, that it made him prolong the day; and though they are mistaken in the cause, yet the ancient poets discover a tradition of this miraculous event, * when they describe the heaven's blushing, and the sun's standing still, at the sight of the unnatural murder which Atreus committed. For if Statius mistake not, this bloody fact happened in the time of the Theban war, which, according to the best chronologists, was much about the time of Joshua's conquest of Canaan. But even supposing Statius, or any other author from whom he took the hint, are mistaken in their chronology, *² the time of Phaeton's life (whose story of misguiding the chariot of the sun is supposed to take its rise from hence) will synchronize with the year of the sun's standing still in the days of Joshua. So that, as to the most wonderful transactions, which, in this space of time, we meet with in holy writ, "God has not left himself without a witness;" forasmuch as the heathen writers (though with some variation or disguise, according to the humour of their mythologists) are known to relate the same things.

From Josh. i.
to the end.

DISSERTATION I.

OF THE SHOWER OF STONES, AND THE SUN'S STANDING STILL.

OF all the miraculous things that happened in Joshua's wars with the people of Canaan, the shower of stones which God sent upon his enemies while they fled, and the stop which he put to the course of the sun, that he might have a longer space to destroy them in their flight, are the most remarkable, and do therefore deserve a more particular consideration.

The former of these events the Sacred History represents in this manner—(*b*) "And

(*a*) His word are these:

Θεὸς οὕτως ἐκείνῳ

"Ἦλθε παρ' Ἡελίου καλὸν χρόνον· ἀλλὰ θιγῆται
Δίφρον ἐπιστήσας τὰ δὲ Φάσα μὴκύνονται.

Callimachus in Dianam.

* Tardius humenti noctem dejecit Olympo
Jupiter, et versum miti, reor, æthera curâ
Sustinuit, dum fata vetant; nec longius unquam

Cessavere novæ, perfecto sole, tenebræ.

Statius Theb. lib. i. et v.

*² The sun stood still in the days of Joshua, A. M. 2554, when Phaeton was about twenty-four years old, an age of ambition enough to desire, though not of ability to execute, the difficult province which he undertook. Shuckford's Connection, vol. iii. lib. xii.

(*b*) Josh. x. 11.

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&c. or 3803.
Ant. Chris.
1451, &c.
or 1608.

it came to pass, that as they (viz. the army of the Amorites) fled from before Israel, and were in the going down to Beth-horon, the Lord cast down great stones from heaven upon them unto Azekah, and they died. They were more which died of the hailstones than they which the children of Israel slew with the sword." But the difference among commentators is, whether we are to understand this miracle of a shower of stones, properly so called, or of a shower of hail?

The learned Calmet, in a dissertation prefixed to his commentary upon Joshua, has taken a great deal of pains to show, that the stones which the Lord is said to have cast upon the Amorites, were not ordinary hailstones, (since it would be incongruous, as he thinks, to interest God in so common an occurrence) but real solid stones, which he supposes might have been engendered in the air by a whirlwind carrying up sand or gravel into a cloud, and there mixing it with some such oily or nitro-sulphureous matter, as might consolidate, and form it into a combustible body; that so, when, by frequent agitation, it came to be fired, it might burst through the cloud, and scattering itself upon the explosion, might fall down upon the earth in the nature of a perfect shower of stones.

That great quantities of stones have in this manner been discharged from the clouds, is evident from several histories. Diodorus Siculus (*a*) informs us, that as the Persian army was on their march to plunder the temple at Delphos, thunder and lightning, and a violent storm of stones fell in their camp, and destroyed a great number of men. (*b*) In the reign of Tullus Hostilius, when news was brought to the government that it had rained stones upon Mount Alba, those who were sent to inquire into the matter, brought word, not only that the fact was true, but that these stones had fallen from the skies with an impetuosity equal to the most violent storm of hail. (*c*) Not long after the battle at Cannæ, the same author assures us, that a storm of the same kind fell on the same mountain, which lasted for two whole days; and events of this nature, attested by the best authors, have been so frequent at Rome, at Capua, at Lavinium, and several other places in Italy, that a man must be destitute of all modesty who pretends to deny them absolutely.

Nay, not only great quantities of smaller stones, but sometimes stones of a prodigious size, have been known to fall from the clouds, whereof a learned author, (*d*) among many others, gives us several instances, both of ancient and modern date. But then it is justly to be questioned, whether these authors have not suffered themselves to be imposed on by the too confident narrations of others. We may suppose indeed, that whirlwinds or hurricanes may raise the sand or gravel, and carry it on high, or some sudden eruptions of subterraneous fire may discharge great quantities of cinders or ashes into the air, where, meeting with some exhalations of a sulphureous, oily, or nitroline quality, they may, by the pressure of the clouds, be condensed and hardened into a stony substance; yet, how any cloud should be able to support such a quantity of smaller stones, much more of vast massy ones, as would be necessary to destroy the army of the five confederate kings, and to continue falling down upon them from Beth-horon to Azekah, places which lay in different tribes, and can hardly be supposed less than twelve or fourteen miles distant (to say nothing of the many apertures in the earth, which must have been seen afterwards in these parts, upon supposition that the thing was effected by vulcanos), is a matter not altogether so credible.

The truth is, there is no reason for carrying this miracle so high; since a shower of hailstones will not only do the work every whit as well, but seems to be the genuine import of Joshua's words; who, having acquainted us, that the Lord cast down great stones upon the Amorites, adds, by way of explication, "that they were more that died by the hailstones than by the sword;" where it is reasonable to suppose, that had there

(*a*) Vol. ii. lib. xi. (*b*) *Liv.* lib. i. Dec. i.
Dissertation who has given us a large account hereof.

(*c*) *Ibid.* lib. 25, 30, 34.

(*d*) See *Saurin's*

been great stones, as well as hail, the death of the greater number of those that perished would not have been attributed to the hail only.

From Josh. i.
to the end.

It is some confirmation of this exposition, that we find the Septuagint, in both places of the text, translating it *Λιθους Χαλαζης*, which Josephus (a) calls “a violent tempest of hailstones of a prodigious size;” and the author of (b) Ecclesiasticus thus recounts the whole matter; “with hailstones of a mighty power, he made the battle to fall violently upon the nations, and in the descent of Beth-horon he destroyed them that resisted.

The prophet Ezekiel, in his predictions against Gog, introduces God as threatening that (c) “he would plead against him with pestilence, and with blood, with an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire, and brimstone:” And in another place, speaking of false prophets, who seduced his people into an opinion of their security as if they had been fortified within a wall, he pursues the metaphor, and tells those who “daubed it with untempered mortar, (d) that it should fall; for there shall be an overflowing shower (says he) and ye, O great hailstones, shall fall, and a stormy wind shall rent it.” So that from these, and several other passages of the like nature, we may learn, that, in executing his judgments upon the face of the earth, hailstones are very frequently arrows in the hands of the Almighty: And of what force they are to do execution we are advertised in what befel the Egyptians, when (as the Sacred History has related it) (e) “the Lord sent thunder and hail, and the fire ran upon the ground: And the Lord rained hail upon the land of Egypt; so there was hail, and fire mingled with hail, very grievous, such as there was none like it in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation. And the hail smote, throughout all the land of Egypt, all that was in the field, both man and beast: It smote every herb of the field, and brake every tree of the field.” Nor are there examples of a later date wanting (especially in our philosophical transactions) of the vast havock and destruction that hailstones (from (f) one to five pounds weight) have done in several places; killing both man and beast, and laying the whole country waste for some sixty or seventy miles round. And therefore, since it is agreed on all hands that hailstones have frequently fallen, large enough to destroy never so great a number of people when naked and defenceless against their blows, what need is there for our having recourse to any other solution:

A shower of hail, indeed, may be supposed to proceed from a more natural cause: but when the event happened at the very instant wherein God promised to assist his people against their enemies; when, though it might have annoyed either army, it fell only on that which God had before determined to ruin; and fell so very heavily upon it, as to destroy more than the sword of the conquerors had done; such an event as this, I say, cannot but be looked upon as a miraculous interposition of Providence, how fortuitous soever the concurrence of second causes may be. In working miracles God usually employs natural causes and productions. He does not create any new thing for the purpose, but makes use of what is already created in a new and extraordinary manner: And therefore, though the shower of hail, and probably the wind too, which made it fall with such impetuosity, were both of them natural; yet the sending them at the very nick of time, and directing them to fall upon the enemy only, in this there was manifestly the hand of God, and something supernatural.

The other miracle is thus related in Holy Writ. (g) “Joshua said, in the sight of all Israel, sun stand thou still upon Gibeon, and thou moon in the valley of Ajalon. And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves of their enemies. Is not this written in the book of Jasher? So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day: And there was no day like that, before or after it, that the Lord hearkened unto the voice of a man; for

(a) *Antiq.* lib. v. c. 1.

(b) Chap. xlv. 6.

(c) Chap. xxxviii. 22.

(d) *Exek.* xiii. 11.

(e) *Exod.* ix. 23, &c.

(f) *Saurin's Dissert.* sur la Defaite des cinq Rois.

(g) *Josh.* x. 12, &c.

A. M. 2553, the Lord fought for Israel." Now for the better understanding of these words we must observe :

&c. or 3803.
Ant. Chris.
1451, &c.
or 1608.

1. That nothing is more common in Scripture than to express things, not according to the strict rules of philosophy, but according to their appearances, and the vulgar apprehension concerning them. The sun and moon, for instance, are called (a) "two great lights;" but, however that title may agree with the sun, it is plain that the moon is but a small body, the least that has yet been discovered in the planetary system, and that it has no light at all but what it borrows and reflects from the rays of the sun; and yet, because it is placed near us, it appears to us larger than other heavenly luminaries, and from that appearance the Holy Scriptures give it such an appellation. And, in like manner, because the sun seems to us to move and the earth to be at rest, the Scriptures speak a great deal of the pillars, and basis, and foundations of the earth, and of the sun's (b) "rejoicing, like a giant, to run its race," and of (c) "his arising, and going down, and hastening to the place where he arose," &c. Whereas it is certain, that (d) if the sun were made to revolve round about the earth, the * general law of nature would thereby be violated; the harmony and proportion of the heavenly bodies destroyed; and no small confusion and disorder brought into the frame of the universe: But, on the contrary, if the earth, turning upon its own axis every day, be made to go round the sun in the space of a year, it will then perform its circulation, according to the same law, which the other planets observe; and (without the least exception) there will be a most beautiful order and harmony of motions everywhere preserved through the whole frame of nature. As therefore the Scriptures were designed to teach us the art of holy living, and not to instruct us in the rudiments of natural knowledge, it can be deemed no diminution, either to their perfection or Divine authority, that they generally speak according to the common appearance of things, and not according to their reality or philosophic truth. The plain matter of fact is, that in the early ages, both before and long after the days of Joshua, the most learned astronomers had no notion of the improvements which our modern professors have since attained to. They never once dreamed of the earth's rotation upon its own axis; but, according to common appearance, were fully persuaded that the sun and moon had their respective courses. Upon this supposition they formed their schemes, and thought themselves able to answer every phenomenon by them. And therefore, if God had prompted Joshua to desire the prolongation of the day, in a manner more agreeable to our new astronomy, or to record the miracle in terms more suitable to it; this would have been a plain contrariety to all the rules of science then in use. The people who heard him utter the words, "earth rest upon thy axis," would have thought him distracted; and those who read his account of what had happened, if related in suitable expressions, would have decried it as false in fact, or passed it by with contempt and disregard, as a wild fancy or blunder of his own.

(a) Gen. i. 16.

(b) Psal. xix. 5.

(c) Ecclesiastes i. 5.

(d) Keil's Astronomical Lectures.

* Besides this general argument of Mr Keil's, Mr Whiston has one which he accounts no less than a demonstration: "If the earth, says he, have an annual revolution about the sun, it must affect the apparent motion of all the other planets and comets; and, notwithstanding the regularity of their several motions in their own orbits, must render these regular motions to us as living upon the moving earth, sometimes direct, and that swiftly or slowly; sometimes stationary, and sometimes retrograde, and that swiftly or slowly also; and all this, at such certain periods, in

such certain places, for such certain durations, and according to such certain circumstances, (as geometry and arithmetic will certainly determine), and not otherwise. Now, that this is the real case in fact, and that every one of these particulars are true in the astronomical world, all that are skilful in that science do freely confess, even those who do not think fit to declare openly for this annual revolution of the earth, which yet is the natural and certain consequence of that concession." *Whiston's Astron. Princ. of Relig.* The reader, that is desirous to know more both of the annual and diurnal motion of the earth, may consult Mr *Derham's Prelim. Disc. to his Astro. Theol.*

2. In relation to the places over which the two heavenly bodies were to stand, the sun over Gibeon, and the moon over the valley of Ajalon, we must observe, that (even From Josh. i. to the end. upon the supposition of the sun's motion) the Jewish general cannot be thought to speak in a proper and philosophic sense. For, since the sun is almost a million of times bigger than the earth, and some millions of miles distant from it, to justify the strict sense of the words, a line drawn from the centre of the sun to that of the earth must exactly pass by Gibeon, which we know it cannot do, because no part of the holy land lies within the tropics: And therefore we must conclude, that Joshua here speaks according to the outward appearance of things, which makes the sense of his words plain and intelligible.

Wherever we are (if so be we are not hindered by objects immediately surrounding us), we can cast our eye upon part of the surface of the earth, and at the same time take into our prospect some small extent of the firmament of heaven, which seems, as it were, to cover the other; and each celestial body which we perceive in this extent above, appears to us to be directly over such and such part of the earth, as we alternately turn our eyes to: and it was thus that the sun, when Joshua spake, seemed to him, and to those that were with him, to "be over Gibeon, and the moon to be over the valley of Ajalon." This valley, in all likelihood, took its name from some adjacent town; but then, as there are three Ajalons mentioned in Scripture, one (*a*) in the tribe of Ephraim, another in (*b*) Zebulun, and another in (*c*) Dan, it is reasonable to think, that the place here spoken of was in Dan, the most remote province from Gibeon; for we must suppose that these two places were at some considerable distance, otherwise Joshua could not see the sun and moon both appear at the same time, as it is probable they were both in his eye when he uttered these words.

3. In relation to the time when this miracle began, and how long it lasted, the Scripture's expression is, that the "sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day;" which words can import no less, than that the sun stood still in the meridian, or much about noon, and that in this position it continued for the space of a civil or artificial day, i. e. for twelve hours. But (*d*) Maimonides is of opinion (and in this he is followed (*e*) by some Christian writers) that there was no such cessation of the sun and moon's motion, but that the whole purport of the miracle was this:—"That God, at Joshua's request, granted him and his soldiers such a degree of spirits, activity, and dispatch, as enabled them to gain a complete victory, and do as much execution in one day as might otherwise have taken up two;" but this is a construction so repugnant to the genuine sense of the words as to need no formal confutation.

There is something more, however, to be said to the notion of other learned men, who, with regard to the time when Joshua might send up his request, and the miracle begin, think it more probable, that he should pray for a longer day when he perceived the sun just going to leave him than when it was in its height. But Joshua, no doubt, had reasons for what he did: He was an old experienced general, eager for a complete victory, and able to compute what time it would take to achieve it; so that his fear of losing any part of the present advantage might make him pray that the day might be thus prolonged until he had obtained the whole. If the sun in its declension had stopped its course, it might have answered his purpose perhaps; but then it had given a juster handle to the suggestions of those who would deny the whole merit of the miracle. For if the retardation of the sun had not happened until it was going to set, (*f*) Spinosa might, with a much better grace, have attributed the extraordinary length of this day to the refraction of its rays from the clouds, which at that time were loaded

(*a*) 1 Chron. vi. 69.
part ii. chap. 39.

(*b*) Judges xii. 12.
(*e*) Grotius and Masius in locum.

(*c*) Josh. xix. 42.

(*d*) More Nevoch.
(*f*) Tract. Theolog. Politic. c. 2.

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with hail; or (a) Peirerius, to some *aurora borealis*, or *parhelium*, which, after the setting of the sun, might appear about the territories of Gibeon, and so be mistaken for the sun's standing still: But now, by fixing it in its meridian point, all these cavils are effectually silenced; and (b) God, no doubt, who heard him so readily, inspired the Hebrew general with that wish or prayer, which otherwise perhaps would never have come into his head.

4. In relation to the book of Jasher (or of just and upright men), which Joshua quotes as a voucher of the truth of this miracle, the opinions of learned men are much divided. (c) Some think that it was the book of Genesis, which is here so called, because it treats of the lives of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, three of the most righteous men that the world then knew. The Targum of Jonathan calls it the Book of the Law, as containing, not only the chief precepts which God gave his people, but several promises likewise of the wonders which he intended to work for them. (d) Josephus, and some interpreters after him, will have it to be certain annals of the lives and particular adventures of some Jewish worthies, and of other things remarkable that happened to that nation; though others again suppose, that this was only a collection of some verses, which the Israelites thought themselves concerned to learn by heart, the better to remember the miracles which God had been pleased to vouchsafe them. But whatever the subject of this book was, or † whether it was composed in prose or verse, it is a groundless conjecture to say, (e) that it was wrote in a figurative and hyperbolical style, or that the quotation which Joshua takes from it is so to be understood. The design of the quotation is only to confirm what Joshua had said concerning the retardation of the sun; and therefore, if the book of Joshua affirms that the sun did stand still, that of Jasher (in what style soever it was written) must necessarily be supposed to do the same, otherwise it would have been to no purpose to have cited it.

It cannot be denied, indeed, but that upon some occasions the sacred penmen do use figures and poetical expressions; but then the sense and chain of the discourse do easily discover it when they do so. Whenever they intend to express themselves in a figurative manner, there is usually something going before which prepares the reader for it; and besides that figurative expressions cannot be long continued, there is always something apparently in them that can by no means be reduced to a literal sense. But now, in the Scripture account of this transaction, where do we perceive any thing like

(a) *Præadam*. lib. iv. c. 6.

(b) *Cabnet's* Dissert. sur le Commandment, &c.

(c) *J. Jarch.* in Josh. x. 13.

(d) *Antiq.* lib. x. c. 17.

† M. Le Clerc has taken the pains to versify the two places where mention is made of the "sun's standing still," by the transposition of some words, in order to make it appear at least probable, that the author of the book of Joshua, in quoting them out of that of Jasher, had only reduced them to historial prose by the contrary transposition. But, besides the difficulty of telling us what kind of verses these are (since the art of scanning Hebrew poesy has been lost as long as St Jerom's days), if he supposes them to be only rhymes and cadences, it is no uncommon thing, we know, to meet with several passages, both in the scriptural and other prose writers, which, with a small variation of the text, are capable of this harmonious turn, and yet were originally never so intended. It is to be observed, however, that though the words, "so the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hastened not to go down about a whole day," are

probably cited from some ancient record, yet the preceding ones, "and the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies," (Josh. x. 13.) are the author's own, wherein he talks, not in the loftiness of a poet, but in the plainness and simplicity of an historian: And therefore it is, at least, a bold assumption to say, that a writer, who barely appeals to another for the truth of a single instance, has taken the whole from him. The most that can be fairly concluded from such an appeal, is, that the fact is equally affirmed by both, either in the same or equivalent terms; whereas, had the terms of the "sun's standing still in the midst of heaven" been intended to mean no more, than that there remained so much light after its setting, occasioned by some unusual refraction, as made the whole army think it was still above the horizon, no honest man (for fear of imposing on his reader) would have cited them without modifying their sense or giving them an explanation. *Saurin's* Dissertation, sur la Defaite des cinq. Roys, and *Univers. Hist.* lib. i. c. 7.

(e) *Grotius* and *Le Clerc* in locum.

this? (a) Joshua, seeing the enemy put to the rout, begs of God to give him a complete victory, and at the same time, out of the zeal and fervour of his mind, commands the sun and moon not to advance any farther until he had effected his desire. The sacred historian tells us, that at his command these heavenly luminaries actually did stand still; and to evince the credibility of a thing so marvellous, having produced the testimony of another author that makes mention of the same event, he thereupon concludes, that (b) “there was no day like that, before it or after it, that God hearkened to the voice of a man.” Here we see are all the tokens imaginable of a simple, literal, and historical narration; and the reader must therefore be strangely prejudiced against the belief of all miracles whatever, who can possibly distort such plain and uniform expressions into any figurative or metaphorical sense, in order to evade the force of this.

“But if there really was such a miracle wrought, it is somewhat strange, that the author of the epistle to the Hebrews, when he certainly makes mention of things of less moment, should entirely forget this, or that we should have no memorial of it recorded by any profane writer. God is not so prodigal of his miracles, one would think, as to reverse the whole order of nature, and stop the sun in its regular course, merely that a victory might be obtained in one day, which, every whit as well, might have been gained in two; though it cannot be denied, but that, if it was so, his hearkening to the voice of Joshua, gave him a pre-eminence far above Moses (forasmuch as all his miracles were nothing in comparison of this), even though the Scriptures say expressly, that (c) ‘there rose not a prophet, in all Israel, like unto Moses, in all signs and wonders, which the Lord sent him to do in the land of Egypt, and in the wilderness.’”

The author of the epistle to the Hebrews, in (d) the chapter now under debate, meant no more, than to give his reader some notable instances of the wonderful power of faith. To have been too curious in the choice of these instances, especially when he wrote to persons of the same nation, and who were as well acquainted with these things as himself, would have savoured too much of art and human wisdom, which inspired authors always professedly avoid; and to have been too prolix in the commemoration of them, would have spoiled the form of his epistle, by swelling that part of it beyond its due proportion.

The apostle himself seems to be sensible of this; and therefore we find him cutting himself short, omitting some, and reckoning up several other instances in the gross; and (e) “what shall I more say? for the time would fail me, to tell of Gideon, and of Barak, and of Sampson, and of Jephtha; of David also, and Samuel, and all the prophets.” You see, that in the catalogue of his worthies, he observes no great method in enumerating them, nor does he so much as mention Joshua, though his character be vastly superior to that of Gideon and others that he takes notice of; and therefore, if his omitting this particular of the sun’s standing still may be deemed a sufficient argument against its reality; by parity of reason, all the other miraculous transactions, which he has thought proper not to mention, such as the plagues of Egypt, the wonders in the wilderness, the passage of Jordan, and several others of the like nature, must be reputed destitute of truth, how frequently soever they may be recorded in other parts of Holy Writ.

And in like manner, though we find no mention made of this wonderful event in heathen writers, yet this is no valid objection against it, because it happened many ages before there was any historians or chronologers, that we know of, extant to record it. Or if we think that a fact so very remarkable could have hardly escaped a general observation, why may we not suppose, that the public archives or monuments wherein it was recorded, in the long and obscure time that intervened before any of our present

(a) Calmet’s Dissert. sur le Commandment, &c.

(b) Josh. x. 14.

(c) Deut. xxxiv. 10, 11.

(d) Chap. xi.

(e) Ver. 32.

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historians arose, have been lost; and that nothing has been transmitted to us (except what we have in Sacred Writ) but an uncertain tradition, clouded with fable and poetical fictions?

It can hardly be thought, indeed, but that the humour which the poets had, * of imputing to magic the power of stopping the stars in their courses, and what they relate of their heroes and demi-gods being able to lengthen days or nights, as it best served their military or amorous purposes, proceeded from something: And to what can we ascribe it more properly than to a glimmering knowledge, which they might from tradition have of this miraculous event? But however this be, it is certain, that the argument drawn from the silence of heathen authors, can be of no validity against the truth of this miracle, since it did not happen in any age when the earliest of them lived, and might therefore be what they knew nothing of; since all their works have not descended to us, and in what is lost, they perhaps might have related it, as in what is extant we are sure they say nothing to contradict it.

(a) It must be reckoned a point of justice then, and a kind of right belonging to all nations, to be determined in what concerns the history of any country, by the history of those people, who are presumed to be better acquainted with their own affairs than any strangers can: And therefore we cannot, without apparent prejudice, deny this privilege to the Hebrew writers, even though we found some heathen testimonies not entirely according with them. But when nothing of this is pretended; on the contrary, when (as far as those dark times would permit) there is a concurrence and harmony between them, there can be no shadow of reason for calling in question their veracity, unless the things which they relate be either impossible or contradictory, which in the case before us can never be affirmed; because it is sure and self-evident, that the Author of nature, who gave being and motion to the sun and stars, may stop that motion, and make them stand still when, and as long as he pleases; especially when their rest will contribute to his glory (as it certainly did in this instance) as much as their continued motion does.

God indeed never works any miracle but upon a just and proper occasion; but then we ought to remember, that this battle against the confederate kings was fought, not offensively, but defensively on the side of Israel, in order to save a people whom they had solemnly taken under their protection. The Gibeonites, as is generally supposed, were a commonwealth, for which reason they might not enter into a league with the five kings; and as a free people, they had a right, no doubt, to take all proper measures for their safety. Joshua therefore could not but look upon the confederacy formed against them as cruel and unjust, and himself obliged in honour not to refuse the oppressed the succours they requested of him, upon any pretence whatever; since God's honour was likewise concerned in the preservation of a people who had entered into an alliance with his own inheritance, and had their alliance ratified by the mouth of his high priest, and with the sanction of his most blessed name. Upon these considerations, Joshua loses no time, but marches all the night to their assistance; and on the next day God is pleased to reward his faithfulness and zeal with a most miraculous victory, whereby he not only rescued his allies, but made all the land of Canaan sensible likewise, that a greater and more powerful God was on Israel's side than any whom they worshipped, (b) by stopping the sun and moon (which were two of the principal deities whom those idolatrous people adored) in the midst of their course.

God might, no doubt, in the compass of two days, have enabled the Israelites to have gained a complete conquest over their enemies, without the expence of a miracle (as

* Cessavère vices rerum, dilataque longâ

Hæsit nocte dies: legi non paruit æther,

Torpuît et præceps, audito carmine, mundus.

(a) Calmet's Dissert. sur le Commandment, &c.

Lucan's Phars. lib. vi.

(b) Patrick's Comm. in locum.

these men call it); but then, had this been obtained by the dint of the sword only, it would have been imputed to their superior valour and strength, and deemed no more than the common fate of war; or had there nothing more remarkable happened in it than a shower of large hail stones, this might have been thought owing to chance or natural causes, or at most been only known in that neighbourhood; whereas, the stopping of the two great luminaries in the height of their career (which could not but be universally seen and felt), was enough to convince these poor deluded people, that the gods whom they trusted in were subject to the God of Israel, and at the same time deter the Israelites from falling into the like idolatry, from (a) “kissing their hand (as Job expresses that form of worship) when they beheld the sun as it shined, or the moon walking in its brightness:”—To convince them, I say, that (b) “the gods of the heathens were but idols, and that it is the Lord who made and who ruleth in the heavens.”

It cannot be questioned but that the fame of this miracle raised Joshua's reputation to an high degree, nor (c) can we see any inconvenience in admitting that this was a more remarkable miracle than any which Moses ever did; because it does not therefore follow, that Joshua, in other respects, was a person of greater eminence than Moses. Our blessed Saviour tells his disciples, (d) “Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also, and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father:” And yet he gives us to understand, in another place, that (e) “the disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his Lord.”

Elisha was the servant and attendant on the prophet Elijah, and yet it is certain that, according to our estimate, he did more and greater miracles than his master did; for even (f) “after his death his body prophesied (as the son of Sirach expresses it); he did wonders in his life, and at his death were his works marvellous.” And therefore we need not account it a strange thing, that we find Joshua here doing a miracle which in our opinion surpasses all that ever Moses did: Because God's making use of the ministry of one man rather than another, in his surpassing works of wonder, is no certain proof of the man's superior merit; since in this, as well as any other dispensation, he is at perfect liberty (g) “to choose (if he pleases) the weak things of the world, to confound the things that are mighty; yea, and base things, and things that are not, to bring to nought things that are, that no flesh should glory in his presence.”

But, after all, we talk of greater and less miracles, when in reality there are no such degrees of comparison between them. For what is it that makes us account one work of this kind greater than another? If it be because we conceive more difficulty in the doing it, this, with regard to God (the sole author of all miracles), is a great mistake, forasmuch as all things are equally easy to his Almighty power. The motion and other properties of every created being were at first impressed by him; (h) “He spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast;” and, with the same facility, he can retard or suspend their operations, for they have no power of resisting the very first beck of his will. Since every thing, therefore, that is contrary to the ordinary course of nature requires the interposition of an Almighty power, and whatever is not impossible in itself is equally possible to God; with him there can be no difference between passing the Jordan and passing the Red Sea, between drawing water out of the stony rock and arresting the sun in the firmament of heaven; for (i) “whatever he pleased that did he, in heaven, and in the earth, in the sea, and in all deep places.”

(a) Job xxxi. 26.

(b) Psal. xcvi. 5.

(c) Calmet's Dissert. sur le Commandment, &c.

(d) John xiv. 12.

(e) Matth. x. 24.

(f) Eccclus. xlviii. 13, 14.

(g) 1 Cor. i. 27, &c.

(h) Psal. xxxiii. 9.

(i) Psal. cxxxv. 6.

APPENDIX TO DISSERTATION I.

OF THE SHOWER OF STONES, AND THE SUN'S STANDING STILL.

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[SINCE the days of our author discoveries have been made in chemistry and meteorology, which remove every objection which can be made to the former of these miracles; whilst a little closer attention than he seems to have paid to the meaning of the words in which the latter is recorded, together with an accurate notion of what is meant by the phrase—*laws of nature*, may certainly remove the greatest difficulties, with which the standing still of the sun is thought to be encumbered.

That a heavy shower of hailstones—especially of such magnitude as those which our author says have fallen in several places—was sufficient to effect the destruction of the army of the confederate kings of Canaan, will be readily granted; but hailstones of *five pounds* weight would themselves be miraculous, whilst it is by no means certain that the word *בָּרָד* signifies *hail* in this place. Parkhurst *suspects* that its radical meaning is *congelation* or *the like*, because in *Arabic* it is used for *intense cold*, and also for *firmness* and *stability*; but there may be *firmness* and *stability*, where there is no *intense cold*; and in one of the instances which he gives (a) of its signifying *congealed rain* or *hail*, we know that there was much *heat*, for there was “*fire mingled with the hail*,” and “*fire that ran along upon the ground*.” I do not by this mean to say that there are not occasionally showers of hail during a thunder storm, for every one knows that there are; but I do mean to say that the *hail* with which the fire was mingled in Egypt and ran along the ground, appears from its dreadful effects, much liker those showers of *metallic stones in a state of ignition* which have been lately seen to fall in various countries, than what is usually meant by the word *hail*. The reality of such meteors is now so well established, that it would be a waste of the reader's time to multiply instances of them. They have fallen in every quarter of the globe; they have been analysed by various chemists, who had very different objects in view; they have all been found to differ in many respects from every other known stone; and they have all resembled each other, being all composed of the same ingredients. Mr Howard published a dissertation on these meteoric bodies in the *Philosophical Transactions* for the year 1802; and the proofs which he produced, that they fell from the atmosphere are perfectly irresistible.

“Most of them which have been seen in the act of falling, have been preceded by the appearance of luminous bodies or meteors. These meteors burst with an explosion, and then the shower of stones falls to the ground. Sometimes the stones continue luminous till they sink into the earth; but most commonly their luminousness disappears at the time of the explosion. These meteors move in a direction nearly horizontal; seem to approach towards the earth before they explode; and when found, if found immediately after their fall, are always hot. Their size differs from a few ounces to several tons; they are always covered with a black crust; and in many cases they smell strongly of sulphur (b).” A principal ingredient of them is iron in a metallic state scattered in grains through the stone; and I have seen a sabre, which, as I was assured, on authority that I had no right to call in question, was made of the iron (converted into steel) of one of these stones, which fell in a prodigious shower at *Benares*

(a) Exod. ix. 18—27.

(b) Thomson's System of Chemistry, ed. 3d. vol. 4. p. 163, &c.

on the 19th of December 1798. The number of similar stones that have burst from individual fire-balls, since the attention of men of science was first drawn to this subject, has been very great; but besides these and the shower at Benares just mentioned, we can now, without hesitation, admit the reality of the two showers of stones quoted by our author from Livy, as well as of the shower of iron, which we are told by Pliny fell in Lucania during the year preceding the defeat of Crassus. To all these phenomena we have parallels in modern times so well authenticated as to remove all ground for doubt. Thus, we have a shower of about 1200 stones, of which one was 20, and another 60 lbs. near Padua in Italy in the year 1510; a shower of sand, which continued for 15 hours in the Adriatic, April 6th 1719; an extensive shower of stones in the environs of Agen, July 24th 1790; a shower of about 12 stones at Sienna in Tuscany, July 1794; a shower of stones at Plann, near Tabor, Bohemia, July 3d 1753; a shower of stones at Barboutan, near Roquefort, July 1789*; and, may we not add, the shower of stones, which destroyed the army of the confederated kings of Canaan, near Gibeon, in the days of Joshua, as the most ancient phenomenon of the kind on record?

From Josh. i.
to the end.

I confess, that I am much more inclined to believe that the stones employed on that occasion, were such meteoric stones as those just mentioned, than a shower of ordinary hailstones. Hailstones are not only natural, but common phenomena, and therefore were not calculated to make such an impression on the minds either of the Israelites or of the Gibeonites as a shower of fire-balls or ignited stones. There seems indeed to be little room for doubt but that the one kind of stone is formed in the atmosphere by some natural process as well as the other; but in what manner or by what law of nature the ignited metallic stones are formed, is, I believe, equally unknown to the philosopher and to the peasant. One of the most scientific chemists of the present day, after describing a great variety of such metallic stones, which are to be found in every quarter of the globe, says, that "we may consider them all as fragments of fire-balls, which have burst in the atmosphere; but that the origin and physical cause of those fire-balls will, perhaps, for ages, baffle all the attempts of philosophers to investigate them." The pouring down of such a shower of stones, by whatever process formed, on the army of the Canaanites confederated against Israel, was a miracle admirably calculated to convince the Israelites and Gibeonites of the superiority of Jehovah, over the gods of Canaan, among whom was certainly reckoned (a) "the prince of the power of the air;" but a shower of such hailstones as our author thinks were thrown down, though it would in reality have been equally miraculous, would not have been so striking, nor of course so proper for serving that purpose.

The standing still of the SUN and MOON—the two greatest gods of the whole heathen world—to witness, as it were, the destruction of their own votaries, and even to aid the Israelites in the work of their destruction, was another stupendous miracle, which must have produced the happiest effects on the minds of all who beheld it, and who had not like *Balaam* and *Ahab* absolutely "sold themselves to work wickedness in the sight of the Lord." It is in the highest degree probable that there was in Gibeon a temple to the sun—the king of heaven—from which oracles were given out ‡; and

* For a proof of all these facts, and many more of the same kind, see *Thomson's Chemistry ubi supra*.

(a) See *Whitby's* note on Ephes. ii. 2.

‡ "That Gibeon had a relation to the sun, we may judge from its name; for *Gibu* (גִּבְעָה) signifies a hill, and the term ON is well known to denote the sun. 'Ὦν δὲ ἑστὶν ὁ ἥλιος.' *Cyril. in Hoseam*. 'Ὦν δὲ ἑστὶν καὶ αὐτοὺς ὁ ἥλιος.' *Ibid.* p. 145. Giba-on, therefore, or Gibeon, is literally the *hill or high place of the sun*. In like manner Ajalon, which from אֵילֹן should be expressed AIA-LUN, denotes the *place, or shrine of*

the moon; for *Ai* or *Aia*, in the language of ancient Egypt, and of many other countries, signified a *place*, as *Lun* signified the *moon* among the ancient Hebrews, Germans, and many other nations. It is remarkable, that Benjamin of Tudela, when he mentions this part of the Holy Land, says of *Ajalon*—'Hinc quinque parasangarum iter est ad vallem (אֵילֹן) *Ajalon*, quam Christiani vocant Vaal de Lunâ.' This shews, that there was an ancient tradition concerning the true purport of the name." *Bryant's Observations on Passages of Scripture*.

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perhaps there was another to the moon—the queen of heaven—in the valley of Ajalon. That the Gibeonites had joined their forces to Joshua's, and were with him in great numbers when he arrested the sun and moon in their courses, there can be no doubt; and when they saw the two greatest of their gods obey the voice of the servant of Jehovah, and stand still, to witness the utter destruction of those by whom they had been hitherto most zealously worshipped, that people must have been convinced of the vanity of their former religion, and the Israelites confirmed in their belief of their own. When the two luminaries were arrested in their courses, the sun was probably in the horizon with his rays gilding the turrets—perhaps the turrets of the temple—of Gibeon; and the moon shining faintly on the vale of Ajalon, which was too low to be touched by the solar rays then passing over the country in a horizontal direction. Whilst things were in this state, Joshua, we are told, spoke to the Lord; and we may suppose the purport of his address to have been this—“God of all victory, may the sun, by thy command, stand still on Gibeon, and the moon in the valley of Ajalon, till we have avenged ourselves of thine and our enemies. May thy people, from such an instance of thy superiority over the gods of the heathen, be confirmed in their duty, and worship thee alone. And may the Gibeonites, by this display of thy power, be weaned from their idolatry, and see the vanity and impotence of their base deities. May the sun be compelled by thee to linger in the horizon, shining on the temples of Gibeon, and the moon to stand over the valley of Ajalon, that these two greatest deities of the nations, beholding, as it were, the overthrow of their votaries, may bear witness to the truth, and proclaim to all the earth—“The Lord, he is the God; the Lord, he is the God.”

That there are difficulties in the scriptural account of this singular miracle, no man, I suppose, will presume to deny; but the account of every miracle must be attended with difficulties to him, who attempts to account for the *immediate* operations of God by the principles of a superficial philosophy. A miracle may be defined—*an effect contrary to the established constitution and course of things, or, a sensible deviation from the known laws of nature*. Thus, the sun has been known, with this single exception, to rise and set regularly, or, to use more accurate language, the earth has performed one complete revolution on its axis, during the space of twenty-four hours, ever since the beginning of the world; and therefore this sun rising and setting, or this diurnal revolution of the earth, is said to be performed by *an established law of nature*, and a law of the utmost importance. All this is perfectly true, and the language in which it is expressed, is sufficiently accurate; but perhaps it is often used by those, who have never asked themselves what is meant by *an established law of nature*. To *law*, in the proper sense of the word, as it directs the conduct of men and other rational beings, inanimate matter cannot be subjected. To *force*, it may; but what are the forces which move the heavenly bodies, and keep them steady in their respective courses? The common reply is—*attraction and repulsion, or centripetal and centrifugal forces*; and to this reply no objection can be made; but the question recurs—What are those forces, and whence do they proceed? We have no other notion of *force* than what we derive from our own consciousness, when with some exertion we ourselves move a heavy body; but inanimate matter can exert no such force, and to talk of any other kind of force, is to employ words that have no meaning. The only *force*, of which we know any thing, is either volition or what is the necessary consequence of volition; but the unconscious earth is incapable of volition. What then is the cause of the earth's diurnal revolution round its own axis, and of its annual revolution round the sun? To this question no other answer can be given, than that such was the will of God, when he formed the present beautiful system out of chaos. When we contemplate the orbits in which the heavenly bodies move, we soon discover that they are of the same nature with those which are described on earth, by bodies fastened to a centre by some flexible chord, and

at the same time projected by another force in a direction nearly at right angles to that chord. Being perfectly acquainted with these two forces, and capable of reasoning about their combination with mathematical precision, we suppose them to be the very forces which produce the motions of the heavenly bodies round their respective centres, and reason on that hypothesis with absolute certainty as well as with great advantage to ourselves. A moment's reflection however must convince us, that the forces which produce the motions of the sun and planets are not exactly the same—or at least not applied in precisely the same manner—with the forces by which we produce similar motions on the surface of the earth; for the planets are not tied to their respective centres by a flexible chord or chain, as a stone whirled round in a sling is fastened to the hand of him that whirls it, nor is there the smallest reason to suppose that they were in the beginning *actually* projected from the places in which they were formed, as a cannon-ball is projected from the cannon by the force of gunpowder. The cause of their motions must therefore be ultimately resolved into the *fiat* of the Almighty, who, when he formed this universe, willed that the several bodies of which it consists, should roll each round its own axis, and all revolve round their respective centres in certain curves and in certain periods of time. That volition having continued steady, has supported, as it originally produced, the *established constitution and course of things*, and in fact constitutes what is called the *laws of nature*; and this being the case, we may rest assured that no deviation from the known laws of nature can ever take place for a trifling or unimportant purpose, since it implies a change—or something analagous to a change—of volition in him, with whom there is no variableness neither shadow of turning. God, however, could as easily have willed from the beginning, that the earth should occupy the space of thirty-six, or forty-eight, hours, in the performance of its diurnal revolution, as that it should perform that revolution in the shorter space of twenty-four hours; and all things being at once known to him, it must have been part of his original plan to arrest the rotation of the earth on its axis, whenever he should perceive that such a deviation from the usual course of nature, would promote the great object which he had in view, when he formed the earth and peopled it with rational inhabitants.

But it will be said that, although God could easily stop for twelve, or twenty-four, hours the diurnal revolution of the earth, the sudden cessation of so rapid a motion as that of about a thousand miles in the hour, would have produced such a reaction, as must have not only destroyed all animals and vegetables, but have levelled with the ground the most solid buildings, and even have overturned the Alps and the Andes from their bases! This is true, if God could be supposed to have performed his work by halves; but surely it will be allowed that he who, by a volition, could stop the motion of the earth, could, at the same time, prevent the reaction which would otherwise have followed.

It does not, however, appear that an actual cessation of the motion of the earth was necessary to produce all that happened according to the narrative of the sacred historian. The radical import of the word *רום*, which some take to be *silence*, and others, as our translators, *stillness*, is *equable, level, uniform, even, parallel*; and the words *בְּחִצֵּי הַשָּׁמַיִם*, which, in our version, are rendered “in the midst of heaven,” signifying in that division of the heavens which is made by the visible horizon; from all which it follows that the sun must have been in the horizon just ready to set, when Joshua issued the command which appeared to arrest him in his course. The word *שָׁמַשׁ*, which we render *sun*, signifies rather the *solar light* than the *orb* of the sun; and therefore the whole passage might be thus rendered—“Solar light remain thou upon Gibeon, and be thou moon stayed or supported over the valley of Ajalon; and the solar light remained, and the moon was stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies. Is not this written in the book of Jasher? So the solar light lingered

From Josh. i.
to the end.

A. M. 2553,
&c. or 3883.
Ant. Chris.
1451, &c.
or 1608.

in the division of the heavens, or in the horizon, and hasted not to go down about a whole day."

But all this may have been produced, not indeed without a miracle and a great miracle, but certainly without stopping the rotatory motion of the earth. We know that the sun, by one of the present laws of nature, appears to be in the horizon, after he has actually sunk a degree or two below it. What is the cause of this phenomenon? The common reply is the *refractive power* of the atmosphere; but this, like the words *attraction* and *repulsion* in astronomy, is nothing more than metaphorical language; for, in the proper sense of the word, the atmosphere can have no *power*. The fact is simply this, that by the *will of God*, which first brought the universe into being, and now supports it in its present form, a ray of light, passing obliquely out of a rare medium into a denser, is bent at the point of incidence towards the perpendicular, and bent more or less according to the density of the medium into which it passes. If the rays of the setting sun be so bent at present as to make him appear visible in the horizon, when we know him to be a certain number of degrees below it; might not he, who by a mere act of volition produces regularly this effect, by a different act of volition, so order matters, that a ray of light passing from the sun to this earth should be so bent at the angle of incidence and during its progress through the atmosphere, which is of unequal density, as to make the sun visible at once over half the globe, or even over the whole? No man of reflection will say that he could not; and if so, the solar light might have been made to linger on the temples of Gibeon, and the moon to appear in the valley of Ajalon, without stopping the diurnal rotation of the earth, and producing that violent reaction, which is commonly urged as an insuperable objection to the Scriptural account of this miracle. The objection in itself is indeed of no force; for he who could make the rotation of the earth to cease for a few hours, could at the same time prevent the *natural* consequences of such a sudden cessation of motion so rapid; and to Almighty power it was as easy to do all this as to bend a ray of light, round half the surface of our globe, which would have equally served the only purpose for which the miracle appears to have been wrought. The bending of the ray would have been just as great a miracle as the suspending of the motion of the earth; for by either means the duration of the light of day would have been so protracted, as to render that day without a parallel in the annals of the world; and I have stated the alternative, only to shew the unlearned reader that there is nothing, in this stupendous miracle, more difficult to be conceived than there is in every other work of Almighty power—even in the ordinary works carried on according to what is called the laws of nature.]

CHAPTER II.

FROM THE DEATH OF JOSHUA TO THE DEATH OF SAMPSON.

THE HISTORY.

AFTER the death of Joshua * no particular person, that we read of, succeeded him in the government; and therefore the most probable opinion is, that every tribe was governed by their respective heads, or elders, (which form of government subsisted about thirty years), and that, in their wars with the Canaanites, they made them their commanders. For, several of the Canaanitish kings remaining still unconquered, the Israelites unanimously resolved to set about their reduction; and accordingly repaired to the oracle at Shiloh, to ask directions of God which tribe should begin the war. God's orders were, that the tribe of Judah should begin; and therefore they, taking to their assistance the tribe of Simeon, first set upon the cruel † king of Bezek; sacked the town, killed ten thousand of its inhabitants, and, as he was endeavouring to make his escape, seized him, and cut †² off his thumbs and great toes, in the like manner as he had done to no less than seventy little kings or princes, whom he compelled to gather their meat like dogs under his table: So that the similitude of his punishment made the tyrant reflect upon his own cruelty, and acknowledge the justice of God in what he had brought upon him.

From Judges
i. to the end
of Ruth.

After the conquest of Bezek the two united tribes †³ invested Jerusalem, and, having taken it, put the inhabitants to the sword, and set the place on fire. They thence

* The Samaritan Chronicle tells us indeed, that, in the last assembly which Joshua held, he nominated twelve chiefs, of every tribe one, and put it to the lot who should succeed him in the government; that the lot fell upon his nephew Abel, whom he accordingly crowned, and invested with other ensigns of honour, &c. But this is thought to be no more than a fabulous account invented to fill up this void space of time. *Saurin's Dissert. sur Heglon, Roi des Moabites tué, &c.*

† There is another place in Scripture, viz. 1 Sam. xi. 8. where Bezek is mentioned; and since Eusebius and Jerome tell us, that there were, in their days, two towns about seventeen miles from Shechem of the same name, and not far distant from each other, we see nothing of moment to hinder them from being both but one city in former times. *Wells's Geography of the Old Testament*, vol. ii.

†² The reason of their mutilating him in this man-

ner, was to make him incapable of war any more, being unable to handle arms by reason of the loss of his thumbs, or to run swiftly (which was a notable quality in a warrior in those days) by the loss of his great toes. *Patrick's Comment. in locum.*

†³ We do not read that Jerusalem was ever taken by Joshua, though it seems highly probable, that when he took the king of Jerusalem, he did to it as he did to the rest of the cities belonging to those kings, Josh. x. 3. 23. But when he was gone to conquer other parts of the country, it is likely that the old inhabitants returned again and took possession of it, for the land was not then divided among the Israelites. But as Joshua, a little before his death, divided the land, and this city fell in part to the share of the tribe of Judah, they dispossessed the Jebusites that dwelt there of all but the strong fortress on the top of Mount Sion, which held out till the days of David. *Patrick's Commentary.*

A. M. 2561,
&c. or 3849.
Ant. Chris.
1443, &c.
or 1564.

marched to Hebron; and, having made themselves masters of it, went to attack Debir, which was part of Caleb's allotment, though the Canaanites at that time had possession of it. Caleb, † who in all probability was general in these wars, being resolved to storm the place, made proclamation in the camp, that whoever should attack and carry it, should have his daughter Achsah as a reward of his valour; which his gallant nephew Othniel, son to his younger brother Kenaz, achieved, and so not only obtained the beautiful damsel for his wife, but with her a large estate likewise in a well-watered country, which, at her request, her father very generously bestowed on him.

Thus the tribe of Simeon assisted that of Judah, to subdue the mountainous parts about Jerusalem, and the southern parts adjoining to the wilderness of Paran; and when this was done, the tribe of Judah, in like manner, assisted the Simeonites to take Gaza, Ashkelon, and Zephah, which was then called Hormah; so that these places in after-ages came into their possession. Encouraged by these successes, the family of Joseph undertook the conquest of Bethel; and to this purpose sent out spies to take a survey of the town, and to gain what intelligence they could. They perceiving a man coming out of it, immediately seized him, but promised to spare his life, upon condition that he would give them the best information he could in what way the town was approachable. The man did so; and by his information they succeeded so well, that, sending for their forces, they entered the place, and put all the inhabitants to the sword, except the man who had given them intelligence and his family.

The other tribes had equally good success in gaining the possession of the lands that were allotted them; only the tribe of Dan was compelled to quit the plains for fear of the Amorites, and to retire into the mountainous parts of the country, where they were pent up for some time, until the family of Joseph came to their assistance; and, having restrained the insolence of their enemies, reduced them to a narrower tract of land than what they had at first.

One great default, however, in those that were successful against the Canaanites was, that they did not make a right use of their victories, but either through a misplaced lenity, or covetousness, instead of destroying them (as they were commanded), suffered them to live promiscuously among them, and contented themselves with making them tributary; which so far incensed God, that he sent an †² angel from Gilgal to expostu-

† Who was their general on this occasion is not expressly mentioned either in Scripture, Josephus, or any other ancient historian; and yet it is hardly to be questioned but that Caleb was the person. He was of the tribe of Judah, older than any other by twenty years; and yet, like Moses, he continued in his full strength and vigour. He and Joshua were the only two spies who, having searched out the land, gave a true report of it; and therefore, as Joshua was the first general, he had the greatest right to succeed him, and this might be the reason why Joshua at his death named no other. He and Joshua were the two only persons to whom the Israelites gave inheritances for their signal services; and, as his inheritance lay unconquered in this tribe, he had the greatest reason to be active in reducing it. His name alone is mentioned in all these wars; and as his son-in-law, Othniel, was the first deliverer of the Israelites from their oppressions, he seems to have succeeded Caleb in this dignity, as his nearest and most valiant relation. *Bedford's Scripture Chronology*, lib. v. c. 3.

†² The Jews are generally of opinion, that by this angel we are to understand a prophet, who was sent

by God as a messenger, which the word very often imports; and this messenger they commonly take to have been Phineas, who was employed upon this errand. We can see no reason however for their departing from the usual signification of the word, especially when there is no absurdity in it, and the sense of the context seems to require our retaining it. Nay, there is reason to say, that the person who here reproves the Israelites was something more than a created angel; for who but God can speak in this style, "I made you to go out of Egypt?" No prophet, nor any created angel, durst have been so bold: And therefore the opinion of most Christian interpreters is, that it was the Son of God, who is frequently in Scripture called the "Angel of the covenant."² And fit it was for him to appear now as coming from Gilgal, to put them in mind of his illustrious appearance near that place once before, of the assurance he then gave them of his presence with them in the conquest of the land, and of the solemn covenant he made with them by renewing of circumcision. The angel's coming up from Gilgal is therefore mentioned as a very pertinent circumstance, to upbraid the Is-

late the matter with them; to remind them of the favour which he had vouchsafed them, in delivering them out of Egypt, and bringing them into that happy land, of his punctual performance of all the promises he had made them, and of their vile ingratitude in rejecting his precepts, for which he had very justly withdrawn his protection from them.

From Judges
i. to the end
of Ruth.

This reproof made the people, for the present, a little sensible of their transgression, so that they fell into a general lamentation; and, deploring the wretchedness of their condition, offered sacrifices to God, in order to appease his wrath. But no sooner was this fit of humiliation over, but continuing still their correspondence with the Canaanites, indulging themselves in their loose conversation, and making intermarriages with them, they fell into idolatry, and worshipped Baal and Ashtaroth, and other idols of the heathens, which so provoked the Lord, that he left them to themselves; and they (without his protection) made so weak a defence, that they were often taken and enslaved by their enemies.

The first oppressor that the Israelites had was named Chusan-Rishathaim. He was king of Mesopotamia, and when he invaded the territories of Israel, he made an easy conquest, and imposed a tribute on them, which lasted for eight years; but at the expiration of that time, God raised up Othniel, Caleb's son-in-law (who was the first of those whom the Scripture calls judges), and inspired him with courage and resolution to take up arms against the king of Mesopotamia, whom he soon defeated, and settled the Israelites in a state of peace and tranquillity, which lasted for forty years. But during this space of time, the people fell into a general apostacy and corruption of manners, whereof the † two following stories are sad and remarkable instances.

The tribe of Dan (as we said before) being pent up in the mountainous parts, found their territories much too narrow for them; and therefore they sent out of their body five spies to survey the country, and bring them in intelligence, in what part of the regions round about they might most likely extend their bounds. The spies in their journey came to the house of Micah of Mount Ephraim, whose mother, thinking it too much trouble to go to Shiloh to worship and offer sacrifices there, had made an idol, and placed it in a private chapel of her son's building: For her son had an †² ephod

raelites with their base ingratitude to God, and with their sloth in not endeavouring to expel the Canaanites. *Patrick's Commentary.*

† These two stories are related in the xvii, xviii, and xix chapters of Judges, and being so placed, they may seem to belong to the latter part of this period; whereas, in the judgment of most learned men, they were transacted much about this time. It is plain from the text, (chap. xvii. 6.) that these things happened when there was no king (i. e. no ruler, for, properly speaking, there had hitherto been no king) in Israel, but every man did what was right in his own eyes; and the reason why Samuel, or whoever was the author of this book, places them here is, because he was not willing to break the thread of his history by intermixing these matters with it, but reserved them to be related apart by themselves. *Patrick's Commentary.*

†² That the Divine service might be performed with a greater resemblance of what was done at the tabernacle in Shiloh, he made priestly ornaments; for so some learned men take the ephod to comprehend, not only the breast-plate adjoining to it, but all the rest of the vestments used by the high priest. His intention was to set up an oracle in his own house, in imitation of the sanctuary of Moses; and

therefore to make the conformity the greater, it is supposed that he erected a kind of ark, whereon he placed his two teraphims, to answer the two cherubims in the tabernacle, as he caused the priest who officiated for him to wear an ephod, in the manner that the high priest did, when he consulted God. Mr Selden (in his *Syntagma 1. de Diis Syris*, Cap 2.) well observes, that the worship of the true God and of idols was here blended together. The ephod and the Levite, which Micah afterwards provided, were intended, no doubt, for the service of the true God; but the graven image and teraphim, by which the children of Dan desired the Levite to enquire of God, belonged unto dæmons. They neither trusted to the ephod alone which related to God, nor to their teraphim alone, which was their own invention, but thought it necessary to join both together in Divine worship: And thus began idolatry in Israel by the superstition of an old woman, who put this in her son's head. This woman many of the Jews suppose to be the same with Dalilah, who having got so much money of every one of the Lords of the Philistines, thought it expedient to employ some of it in expressing her devotion. But this is an idle conceit, that has no other foundation than Dalilah's being mentioned in the foregoing chapter; whereas Micah was

A M. 2561,
&c. or 3849.
Ant. Chris.
1443, &c.
or 1564.

and teraphim, and, for some time, had consecrated one of his own sons to be his priest; until a Levite, who had dwelt some time at Bethlehem-Judah, travelling from thence to seek a better settlement, happened to call at Micah's house, and by him was hired to execute that office; whereupon the man was fond enough to believe that God would prosper him not a little, now that he had got a Levite to be his priest.

It so happened, that some of these spies being acquainted with this Levite, and after some discourse, understanding in what capacity he served Micah, desired of him to ask counsel of God, what success they might possibly promise themselves in the enterprize they were going upon, and, with the encouragement which he gave them, they proceeded on their search, until they came to Laish; where, observing a pleasant and fruitful country, and the people living in a secure and negligent manner, without any rule or discipline among them, they returned to their brethren, and gave them an account how fruitful the country was, and how easily, in their opinion, the place might be taken by surprise.

Upon this, the Danites drew out a party of six hundred men, and sent them to take possession of the city Laish: But in their way through Mount Ephraim, they called at Micah's house, and, in his absence, seized the Levite, the ephod, the teraphim, and other images that Micah had made; and as the Levite was remonstrating against what they had done, they soon pacified him, by representing the advantage of being a priest to a whole tribe rather than any one family; and with the hopes of that he went very willingly along with them.

Micah returning home, and understanding that his priest and his gods were gone, musters up his friends, and pursues the Danites; but when he came up with some of the hindmost of them, and was making his complaint against the injury they had done, they wished him to be gone; for that, if he persisted to irritate the rest of the party, it would certainly cost him and his friends their lives: And so continuing their march, on the third day they came to Laish, where, finding it unguarded, they burnt the city, destroyed the inhabitants, and took possession of the country; but, in a short time after, they rebuilt the city, which, after the name of their father, was called Dan, and here setting up the images which they had stolen from Micah, they made this same Levite (whose name was Jonathan) their priest: And in this state of idolatrous worship they continued for about three hundred years, even unto the time † that the ark of God was taken captive by the Philistines, which was in the days of Samuel.

Not long after this, the war of the Benjamites broke out, which is another tragical piece of history, and as pregnant a proof of the people's immorality as the other is of their apostacy. The substance of the story is this.—* A Levite of Mount Ephraim,

some hundred years prior to her. *Patrick's Commentary*, and *Jurieu's Hist. des Dogmes & Cult.* Par. iii.

† The words of the text are—"And the children of Dan set up the graven image, and Jonathan and his sons were priests to the tribe of Dan, until the day of the captivity of the land," Judges xviii. 30. But then the question is, what we are to understand by the captivity of the land? Now there are two times mentioned in Scripture when the children of Israel were carried away captive by Tiglath-Pileser, when he "took Habor, and Gilead, and Galilee, all the land of Naphtali, and carried them into Assyria," 2 Kings xv. 29. And, 2dly, by Salmanasser, who "carried Israel away, and placed them in Halah, and in Habor, by the river Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes," 2 Kings xviii. 11. And to one of these the words of the text are supposed by some learned men to refer; but then it must necessarily follow, that this

book was written in later times, even after the former of these captivities at least. It can hardly be supposed, however, that these images should be suffered to continue in the days of David, who was a man after God's own heart, and studied to advance true religion to the utmost of his power all the country over, from Dan to Beersheba; and therefore others, with good reason, conclude, that by the captivity of the land is meant the taking of the ark by the Philistines, and carrying it captive into the temple of Dagon; for so the Psalmist expressly calls that unlucky event—"He forsook the tabernacle in Shiloh, even the tent that he had pitched among them; he delivered their power into captivity, and their beauty into the enemies hands," Psal. lxxviii. 60, 61. *Patrick's* and *Le Clerc's* Commentaries.

* Josephus relates this story with a good deal of variation from the Sacred History:—That the Levite's wife was not a lewd woman, but one who did

having taken a wife out of Bethlehem-Judah, who proved a lewd woman, she made an elopement from her husband to her father's house, where she continued for some months. The Levite, however, being willing to be reconciled to her, went to bring her home; but, in his return, happening to be benighted, he was obliged to turn * into Gibeah, where an old man of Mount Ephraim, who only was an inmate there, after some conversation, received him into his lodgings. But while they were at supper, the men of the city beset the house, and demanded to have the stranger brought out to them, that, according to the sin of Sodom, they might know him. It was in vain to use intreaties to so rude a rabble. The good old man offered them his own daughter, who was a virgin; and at length by consent the Levite's wife was turned out among them. They abused her all that night; and the next morning she was found dead at the threshold, which enraged her husband to such a degree, that, taking her home with him, he cut her dead body into twelve parts, and sent one to every tribe, with an account of the inhospitable treatment he met with at Gibeah; that so, in a general assembly of Israel, it might be resolved what method of revenge it was proper to take upon this dismal occasion.

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of Ruth.

The assembly agreed, that never so inhuman an act had been known in Israel since the time they left Egypt; and thereupon came to a resolution, to bring the offenders to condign punishment; and, in order to that, sent messengers to them, demanding the men that had committed this outrage; but they refused to deliver them, and, in order to defend the criminals, mustered up all their forces. The army of the Benjamites consisted but of six and twenty thousand, whereas that of all Israel amounted to four hundred thousand men; and yet, in two several engagements, the Benjamites had the better of them; for in the former, they killed them twenty-two thousand, and in the latter, eighteen thousand men. But the misconduct of the Israelites upon this occasion was, that, being too confident of the goodness of their cause, and the superiority of their numbers, when they went to consult God, they only enquired of him which of the tribes should lead the van, without placing their confidence in him, or depending upon his assistance for success, which these repeated defeats brought to their remembrance; and therefore, before the third engagement, they humbled themselves in a proper manner before God, and, from his encouragement, attacked the Benjamites once more. But to make their victory the more secure, they laid an ambuscade behind the city, which, while they pretended to fly, entered it, and set it on fire; whereupon the main body of the Israelitish army faced about, and charged so furiously upon the Benjamites, that they slew five and twenty thousand of them, set fire to their city, and destroyed all that belonged to them. It so happened however, that six hundred of them (which were all that remained of the tribe) made their escape into the wilderness, and sheltered themselves in the fortress of Rimmon.

When the heat of the action was over, and the Israelites began to reflect coolly on what they had done, they were grieved not a little; and that the rather, because, at the beginning of this war, they had all taken a rash oath, not to marry their daughters to

not well agree with her husband, for which reason she left him and went to her father; that the young men of Gibeah, seeing her to be a very beautiful woman, took notice of the house where she went in, and came and demanded her, and not the Levite himself, as the Scripture has it; that the Levite did not turn her out, but that the young men took her by force and carried her to their own quarters, where they spent the whole night in all manner of bestial liberties, and then sent her back again next morning; that, upon her return, she fell into such a confusion of thought for what had befallen her that night, that

(what between shame and indignation) she sunk down upon the ground and expired; that the Israelites, met in convention, sent to the Benjamites to deliver up the malefactors who had committed this brutal violence upon the Levite's wife, which they refused to do, as thinking it dishonourable, for fear of a war, to submit to rules of other people's prescribing, &c. *Josephus*, lib. v. c. 2.

* Gibeah lay north of Jerusalem about twenty or thirty furlongs from it, and was built upon an hill, as its name imports. *Wells's Geography of the Old Testament*, vol. iii.

A. M. 2561,
&c. or 3849.
Ant. Chris.
1443, &c. or
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any of the Benjamites : So that how to recruit the tribe they could not tell, until they bethought themselves of these two expedients. When the war first broke out, they had bound themselves by oath, to put all to the sword who would not join them in the common cause against the Benjamites ; and finding by their muster-roll, that the people of Jabesh-Gilead had neglected to come, they dispatched twelve thousand men, with orders to put man, woman, and child to the sword, except such virgins as were marriageable, whom they intended to give to the Benjamites for wives. For, by this time, the Benjamites were reconciled to the rest of the people, had left their strong-hold, and were come into the camp ; so that, when the men returned from the slaughter of the Gileadites, they brought four hundred virgins along with them, which were immediately given to the Benjamites ; but as the Benjamites were six hundred in number, there was not for every man one, and therefore they betook themselves to another expedient.

Once every year † there was a festival kept at Shiloh, whither the young women of the country used constantly to come and dance. The Israelites therefore suggested to the Benjamites, that as many as wanted wives might at this time repair to the place, and, concealing themselves in the vineyards, seize upon the young women as they came out a-dancing, and carry them off to their own habitations. The Benjamites accordingly pursued their instructions ; and watching their opportunity, took every one his damsel away with him : so that having by this means got themselves wives, they settled again in their own country, and began by degrees to recruit their tribe.

After the death of Othniel, the Israelites again revolted from the service of God ; and God, to chastise them for it, suffered Eglon, king of Moab, to subdue them ; so that for eighteen years together they were forced to be tributary to him. But upon their humiliation and repentance, he raised them up a man even out of the diminished tribe of Benjamin, who wrought their deliverance, but in a method nowise to be justified, under a less supposition, than that he had a Divine commission for so doing.

Every year it was customary for the Israelites to send a present or tribute to the king of Moab ; and for that year Ehud, the son of Gera, was appointed to go with it. He was a left-handed man ; and having a design either to free his country from this oppression, or perish in the attempt, he had for this purpose provided himself with a poniard, which he concealed on his right side. After he had delivered the present, pretending he had something of great importance to communicate to the king, he obtained a private audience of him ; when, taking his opportunity, he stabbed him with the poniard to the heart, and so shutting the door after him, had time to make his escape ; for, as the king was a very corpulent man, his attendants supposed that he was either reposing or easing himself, and therefore forbore to enter into his apartment until Ehud was quite gone. As soon as he came to Mount Ephraim, he gathered together the Israelites that lay nearest him ; acquainted them with what he had done ; and then securing the fords of Jordan, that none of them might escape, he fell upon the Moabites

† All the three great festivals were to be observed in the place where God settled his habitation, which was now at Shiloh ; and therefore some are of opinion, that the feast here mentioned was one of these ; particularly, they think, it was the feast of tabernacles, because this was a season of great joy, for having newly gathered their vintage, and the only season wherein the Jewish virgins were allowed to dance. At this time they dwelt in booths too, behind which the Benjamites (as they fancy) might very conveniently conceal themselves, and so watch an opportunity of carrying away the virgins : But what seems to make against this opinion is, that at any of these public festivals, the concourse of people

would have been too great for a design of this nature to be put in execution, since the violence which must of course have been offered to the young women, would hardly have met with a general connivance. It is much more probable therefore, that this was some festival peculiar to the people of Shiloh, which the Benjamites perhaps might know nothing of, and were therefore put in mind of it by the elders of the congregation. Josephus tells us, that it was celebrated thrice every year : And on this festival it might be a custom for the young women to go out into the fields, and there dance by themselves, which might give their ravishers the very opportunity they wanted. *Le Clerc's Commentary.*

and destroyed them all ; so that after this conquest, the eastern part of the land of Canaan enjoyed a settled peace † for the space of fourscore years.

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But though the eastern coast was at rest, yet the west parts of the kingdom were sadly molested by the incursions of the Philistines, who dwelt upon the same shore of the Mediterranean Sea. Upon this occasion, †² Shamgar, the son of Anath, asserted the cause of Israel ; and having received extraordinary vigour from above, with no better weapon than an ox-goad, slew at divers times six hundred of these invaders, and preserved the peace of the country for eight years.

In the north parts of the country, however, the idolatry, which Micah began, propagated apace ; so that God, being highly incensed at the people's impieties, permitted Jabin, who at that time assumed the title of king of Canaan, and †³ had fixed his imperial seat at Hazor, to oppress them with great severity for forty years. This prince had made Sisera (* an experienced soldier no doubt) general of his forces, wherein, besides great store of other military munition, there were nine hundred armed chariots,

† There are two ways, wherein the land (as it is in the text) may be said to have had rest fourscore years. If by the land, we understand the whole kingdom of Israel, the meaning must be, that it rested about fourscore years, or the greatest part of fourscore years ; because it is a very common thing in Scripture, to use numbers in this latitude, and instead of a minute computation, to make mention of the round sum. Thus the Israelites are said to bear their iniquities forty years in the wilderness, Numb. xiv. 33. when there wanted almost two years of that number ; and to dwell in Egypt four hundred and thirty, when, strictly speaking, there wanted several of it : And in like manner, the land is here said to have had rest fourscore years, when it is declared at the same time, that the people served the king of Moab eighteen of them ; nor is it any uncommon thing, in other authors as well as the sacred, to use this form of expression. But, 2dly, if by the land, we understand only such or such a part of it, the solution is easy. For it is but supposing, that there were scarce any of the judges who ruled over the whole country of Israel, but some in one part, and some in another ; so that, at the same time, there were several judges in the land, and peace in one part, when there was war in another ; and then we may (with the learned Sir John Marsham) understand here by the land which had rest fourscore years, not the whole land of Israel, but the eastern part of it only, which had shaken off the yoke of Moab, while, in the mean time, the Philistines invaded the western parts, even as Jabin afflicted the northern, as we may see in the following chapter. *Pool's Annotations*, and *Patrick's Commentary*.

†² Of what tribe this valiant person was, we are nowhere informed ; but it is not unlikely that he was one of those tribes which bordered upon the Philistines, Judah, Dan, or Ephraim, because what he did was against them. It is disputed by some, whether he is to be reckoned among the number of the judges ; but for this, I think, there is no foundation. The short account which the Scripture gives of him, is this :—“ And after him, i. e. after Ehud, was Shamgar, the son of Anath, which slew of the Philistines six hundred men with an ox-goad, and also delivered Israel.” Judg. iii. 31. After Ehud was Shamgar, i. e. he suc-

ceeded him in the office of a judge, for this is the natural sense of the words ; and he also delivered Israel, which is the very phrase whereby the judges are described. It is not said indeed from what oppressions he delivered him ; but he is a deliverer who preserves a nation from being oppressed, as well as he who rescues them from an oppression when they groan under it. This, in all probability, was Shamgar's case, who, when the Philistines invaded his country, gave them a repulse, with the loss of six hundred of their men, which was enough to discourage them from all future attempts. And indeed, the great slaughter which he made among them, with a weapon, in all appearance, so incompetent for the work, argues him to have been a judge, and possessed of a Divine power, as much as Sampson was, who slew a thousand of his enemies with the jaw-bone of an ass. *Patrick's* and *Le Clerc's Commentaries*.

†³ It is very certain, that Joshua burnt the city Hazor, and slew the king thereof, whose name in like manner was Jabin, which might possibly be the common name to all the kings of the country, as those of Egypt were called Pharaoh : But it seems not improbable, that this Hazor might be retaken, and rebuilt by its ancient inhabitants, and that this king might be a descendant of the other. Some indeed interpret the words thus,—That this Jabin was king of that part of Canaan which lay in the country, where Hazor formerly stood, and whose seat then was at Harosheth of the Gentiles ; for they understand this place to be mentioned in the text, as the dwelling-place, not of Sisera, but of Jabin himself, whose general Sisera was. But there is no reason for this inversion of the order of the words, since the Canaanites might, between the time of Joshua and Deborah, find frequent opportunities (considering the corruption and idleness of the Israelites) to re-establish their ancient kingdom in these parts, to rebuild their former capital, and to set up one of the old royal line to be their king ; who (according to the common usages of those ages) retained one and the same name with his predecessors. *Wells's Geography of the Old Testament*, vol. ii. c. 6.

* This Sisera (as Josephus informs us) was a very great favourite of the king's, for the services he had

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which terrified the Israelites to such a degree, that * several tribes, (a) despairing of relief, sat still under their oppression, and some of them were going (b) to transport themselves into other countries. For their enemies were so very cruel to them, that they durst not travel the common roads, nor dwell in villages, for fear of being murdered or plundered; and having no arms left to defend themselves, they were forced to retire to fortified places, and there live together in the utmost consternation.

In the midst of this distress, † Deborah the prophetess, a woman of great eminence, and who for some time had administered justice to the neighbouring tribes, sent to Barak, the son of Abinoam, a message from God, that he should get together ten thousand men of the tribes of Zebulon and Naphtali, and march them to †² Mount Tabor, whither Sisera, with all his numerous army, coming to give him battle, should infallibly be routed. Barak readily agreed to the motion, upon condition that the prophetess would go with him: And so, having mustered up his complement of forces, they both went together, and posted themselves upon Mount Tabor. Sisera had soon intelligence of this; and getting a powerful army together, he made hasty marches from †³ Harosheth,

done in reducing the Israelites, whom he worsted upon several encounters, time after time, and would never give over the pursuit, till he brought them at last to be absolute slaves, and tributaries to his master. *Antiq. lib. v. c. 6.*

* This is the sense of those obscure passages in the song of Deborah. "For the divisions of Reuben there were great thoughts of heart. Why abodest thou among the sheepfolds, to hear the bleatings of the flocks? Gilead abode beyond Jordan, and why did Dan remain in ships? Ashur continued on the sea-shore, and abode in his creeks," &c. Judges v. 15, &c.

(a) Judg. v. 15, 16.

(b) Ibid. viii. 17.

† The words *prophet* and *prophetess* are of very ambiguous signification in both Testaments. Sometimes they denote persons extraordinarily inspired by God, and endued with the power of working miracles, and foretelling things to come; and sometimes they are used for persons endued with special, though not miraculous gifts or graces, for the better understanding and explaining the word of God; and of this sort were the sons of the prophets, or such as were brought up in the schools of the prophets. As therefore we read nothing of any miraculous action that Deborah did, she perhaps was only a woman of eminent holiness, and prudence, and knowledge of the Holy Scripture, by which she was singularly qualified to judge the people, i. e. to determine causes and controversies among them, according to the word of God. For though Jabin oppressed them sorely, yet it was rather by rigorous taxations, than infringing their laws, which he still suffered to be administered by their own officers; and of this he might take the less notice, because the supreme judicature was exercised by a woman, from whose power and authority he thought there was no reason to apprehend any danger; though this certainly gave her an opportunity of endearing herself to the people, and made her, by this means, the fitter instrument to rescue them from oppression. *Pool's Annotations.*

[It is rather surprising that this author should have supposed that there was nothing miraculous in the gifts bestowed on Deborah. Did not she foretel that

the Lord would deliver Sisera into the hand of a woman?]

†² Tabor is a very remarkable mountain in Galilee, not far from Kadesh, in the tribe of Zebulon, and in the confines of Issachar and Naphtali. It has its name from its eminence, because it rises up in the midst of a wide campaign country, called the valley of Jezreel, or the great plain. Josephus tells us, that the height of this mountain is thirty stadia, and that on the top of it there is a beautiful plain of twenty stadia in circumference. By all which, it appears how commodious a place this mountain was to be the rendezvous of Barak's forces, since it stood upon the confines of so many different tribes, was not accessible by the enemy's horses or chariots, and had on the top of it a spacious plain where he might conveniently marshal and discipline his army. What modern travellers tell us of this mountain is much to the same purpose:—"After a very laborious ascent, (says Mr Maundrell) we reached the highest part of the mountain, which has a plain area at top, fertile and delicious, and of an oval figure, about one furlong in breadth, and two in length. This area is inclosed with trees on all parts, except towards the south, and from hence you have a prospect which (if nothing else) well rewards the labour of ascending it; for it is impossible for the eyes of man to behold any greater gratification of this nature. The top of this mountain was anciently environed with walls, and trenches, and other fortifications, of which some remains are still visible; and for many ages it has been believed that here it was that our blessed Saviour was transfigured, in the presence of his three apostles, Peter, James, and John, though some later writers have made a doubt of it." *Calmet's Commentary*, *Pool's Annotations*, and *Maundrell's Journey from Aleppo to Jerusalem*.

†³ A place situated upon the lake Semechon in the Upper Galilee, and is in Scripture called "Harosheth of the Gentiles, because the people of several nations fled thither to be under Jabin's protection, when they heard that he had possessed himself of that country, and kept the Israelites out of it." *Wells's Geography of the Old Testament*, vol. ii.

passed the * river Kishon, and encamped at the foot of the mountain in hopes of cutting off Barak's retreat. Upon this, Deborah advised Barak not to stay till Sisera came up to him, but early next morning to march directly down, and fall upon him with all the assurance imaginable of success. The Hebrew general followed her directions; and, coming down upon the enemy before they were aware, he charged with such fury, *² whilst God, at the same time (by a driving storm of rain and hail in their faces), struck them with such terror, that they were not able to stand before the Israelites, but were soon broken and put to flight. The pursuit, however, continued all day; and as the night approached, the stars shone with an uncommon brightness, to give light to the pursuers; and the river Kishon, *³ being swelled with the hasty rain, drowned the pursued, and carried the dead bodies away towards the Mediterranean Sea.

Sisera, in the mean time, seeing his whole army broken and dispersed, quitted his chariot, and was making his escape on foot; when Jael, the wife † of Heber the Ke-

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* This river rises out of Mount Tabor, and, passing along the valley of Jezreel (now the plain of Esdraelon), empties itself into the Mediterranean Sea. Some geographers will needs have it, that this river runs two ways, partly westward, into the Mediterranean, and partly eastward, into the sea of Galilee; but this is a thing incredible, and what is known of no other river in the world; and therefore, if there be any thing in it, the matter must be this—That, from Mount Tabor (as it happens from many other hills), there flow waters out of two of its sides, some shaping their course westward, to the Mediterranean, and others eastward, into the Sea of Galilee: So that there are two spring heads, and two distinct rivers, though both arising from the same mountain, and perhaps both called by the same name. But whatever becomes of the river that runs eastward, it is plain from another passage, that the Kishon which is mentioned in Scripture, ran westward into the Mediterranean Sea; for when Elijah had convinced the people assembled together at Mount Carmel, that Baal was not the true God, he enjoined them to seize all his priests, and to bring them down to the brook Kishon, there to be slain, 1 Kings xviii. So that the brook Kishon, which rises out of Mount Tabor, must run by Mount Carmel, which stands on the sea-shore; and as Carmel stands west of Mount Tabor, the course of the river, which extends from the one to the other, must be so likewise. *Wells's Geography of the Old Testament*, vol. ii. c. 6.

*² Josephus relates the manner of God's interposition in this action in the following words: "The armies were no sooner engaged, but there arose a violent wind, with a most impetuous tempest of hail and rain along with it. The storm, driving just in the face of the Canaanites, made not only their bows and their slings useless, but their weapons likewise designed for close fight; for they could not so much as open their eyes against the weather; and their fingers were so benumbed with cold too, that they could not handle their arms.—In the conclusion, it came to pass, that the Canaanites army was broken, dispersed, and cut to pieces: So that, betwixt those that fell by the sword, those that were trampled to death under the horses feet, those that were torn to pieces by the chariots, and those that fled away, and fell into the

hands of the Israelites in their flight, this prodigious army, which (according to our author) consisted of thirty thousand foot, ten thousand horse, and three thousand armed chariots, was in effect totally destroyed." *Antiq. lib. v. c. 6.*

*³ Mr Maundrell tells us, that in the condition wherein he saw this river, its waters were low and inconsiderable; but in passing along the side of the plain, he discerned the tracks of many lesser torrents falling down into it from the mountains, which must needs make it swell exceedingly upon sudden rains. *Journey from Aleppo to Jerusalem.*

† He was of the posterity of Hobab, the son of Jethro, father-in-law of Moses; and is here called a Kenite, because originally he descended from those people who dwelt westward of the Dead Sea, and extended themselves pretty far into Arabia Petraea. The word *Ken* (from whence they took their name) signifies a *nest*, an *hole*, or a *cave*; and to this the prophet Balaam might allude when he addresses himself to them in these words:—Strong is thy dwelling-place, and thou puttest thy nest on a rock; nevertheless the Kenite shall be wasted, until Ashur shall carry thee away captive," Numb. xxiv. 21. These Kenites indeed were some of the people whose lands God had promised to the descendants of Abraham; nevertheless, in consideration of Jethro, all that submitted to the Israelites were permitted to live in their own country. In Numb. x. 29. we find, that Hobab was invited by Moses to accompany him into the land of Canaan, and in all probability he accepted the invitation. At their first coming they settled themselves in the territories of Jericho; but having contracted a particular friendship with the tribe of Judah, they removed with them into the country that fell to their lot, Judges i. 16. Every family of them, however, did not so; for this Heber, we find, for some reasons that are not mentioned, had settled his habitation in the tribe of Naphtali, Judges i. 11. The Kenites, indeed, though they were proselytes, and worshipped the true God according to the Mosaic law, yet being strangers by birth, and so not pretending to any right or title to the land of Canaan, held it best policy, in those troublesome times, to observe a neutrality, and maintain peace, as well as they could, both with the Israelites and Canaanites; and upon this foot it was,

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nite, seeing him coming, went to meet him, and invited him into her tent; which he readily accepted, as apprehending no danger from her, whose husband was his master's ally. The fatigue of the day had made him very thirsty, and therefore he entreated Jael to give him a little water; but when, instead of water, she had given him as much milk as he desired, and he had strictly charged her to deny him, in case that any body should enquire for him, he laid himself down to rest. No sooner was he well asleep, but Jael, taking an hammer and a long tent-nail, set it to his temples, and struck with such a force, that it quite pierced through his head, and pinned him to the ground; and when Barak, in pursuit of him, came that way, she called him in, and showed him the place and posture in which his enemy lay.

This victory, which was followed * with new successes every day, put an end to the oppression of the north for forty years. It proved the utter ruin of this kingdom of the Canaanites in Hazor: And, upon many accounts, was attended with so many signal events, that the prophetess Deborah thought it not amiss to compose a triumphant song in commemoration of it; wherein she magnifies the deliverance it wrought, by recounting the many calamities which the Israelites before laboured under; acknowledges its proceeding from the same Divine Being, who descended in great majesty to give the law on Mount Sinai; calls upon all those who partook in the benefits of it to join in the praises of its great author; commends those tribes that came readily to the war, and upbraids all those who declined their country's service.

During this forty years peace, the people again rebelled against God, and God took the punishment of them into his own hands, by sending upon them a grievous famine, wherein several were forced to remove into strange countries; and, among the rest, † one Elimelech, a man of Bethlehem, with his wife Naomi, and his two sons, Mahlon and Chilion, went into the land of Moab to live. Elimelech died there, and his relict married her sons to two women of the country, whose names were Orpah and Ruth. About two years after this, Naomi's two sons died; and she, resolving to return to her own country, desired her daughters-in-law to remain in Moab. Orpah, with tears, took leave of her mother; but Ruth could, by no means, be persuaded to part with her, and therefore she accompanied her to Bethlehem, where, by †² her mother's art and contrivance, she so managed the matter, that she married Boaz, by whom she had Obed, who was the father of Jesse, and the grandfather of David, and from whom (according to the flesh) the Saviour of the world was lineally descended.

After the death of Deborah and Barak, the Israelites fell again into their old im-

that there was a peace with king Jabin and the house of Heber, and that Sisera in his distress fled to Heber's tent for protection, and put confidence in the feigned civilities of his wife. *Howell's History of the Bible.*

* Josephus farther acquaints us, that immediately after this victory, Barak marched with his army towards Hazor, where he encountered Jabin by the way and slew him; and having killed the king, laid the city level with the ground, and afterwards governed Israel for a matter of forty years. *Antiq. lib. v. c. 6.*

† The Book of Ruth, which takes its title from the person whose story is there principally recorded, is properly an appendix to the book of Judges, and an introduction to that of Samuel; and is therefore not only placed between them, but supposed to be wrote by one and the same hand. Its subject is very different from the rest, and is therefore made a distinct treatise. It is indeed of so private a nature, that, at the time of its being wrote, the generality of the peo-

ple might have thought it not worth recording; but we Christians may plainly see the wisdom of God in having it done. It had been foretold to the Jews, that the Messiah should be of the tribe of Judah, and it was afterwards revealed farther, that he should be of the family of David: And therefore it was necessary, for the full understanding of these prophecies, that the history of the family of David, in that tribe, should be written before these prophecies were revealed, that so there might not be the least suspicion of any fraud or design. And thus this book, these prophecies, and the accomplishment of them, serve to illustrate and explain each other. *Bedford's Scripture Chronology, lib. 5. c. 5.*

†² The whole management of this affair is recorded in the book of Ruth, to which we refer our reader, having less reason to be prolix in a matter that concerns a private family only, and what had not been related in such a particular manner, but for the reasons that we have already assigned.

piety, and were again given up into the hand of their enemies. The Midianites were a people situated on the east side of the river Jordan, whom the children of Israel, in their passage to the land of Canaan, (a) had almost totally destroyed; but it is not improbable, that some of that nation, saving themselves by flight into other countries, and after the Israelites were settled in Canaan, returning thither again, might, in the space of two hundred years, repossess the land where they dwelt before, and still retain the name of Midianites. These people, together with their neighbours the Amalekites, † and some other eastern nations, for seven years, kept the Israelites in such subjection, that they were forced to betake themselves to the mountains, and to dwell in dens, and caves, and fortified places, from whence, as the spring came on, they stole out, to cultivate and sow their land, but all to no purpose: For towards the time of harvest, these enemies made inroads into the country; and having destroyed the increase of the earth, and killed all the cattle which fell into their hands, they then returned home, and left the poor Israelites nothing to support themselves withal. Upon this sore calamity, the people began to be sensible of their apostasy, and to humble themselves under the afflicting hand of God; whereupon God †² sent them a prophet, who reproached them sharply with their base ingratitude, but at the same time, †³ sent his angel to Gideon, the son of Joash, who dwelt at †⁴ Ophrah, and was then threshing out his corn, in a private and unsuspected place, the better to conceal it from the depredation of the enemy.

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To him the angel signified the purport of his message; which was to acquaint him, that the Lord had made choice of him for the deliverance of his people. Gideon at first excused himself upon account of the obscurity of his family and fortune; and when the angel urged the thing, he desired of him some token of the Divine mission, and at the same time requested him to accept of a small entertainment from his hands. The angel seemed not to refuse the invitation; whereupon Gideon hastened, and ha-

(a) Numb. xxxi. 7, &c.

† Though the Midianites were the principal people concerned in these invasions and inroads, yet, besides the Amalekites, they had other confederate nations, who are called the children of the east, Judg. vi. 3. 33. by whom we may understand the Ammonites and Moabites, as lying east of the land of Israel, if not the Ishmaelites, and others that inhabited the parts of Arabia. The children or people of the east, in Gen. xxix. 1. denote the inhabitants of Mesopotamia; but these seem to be too far distant to have any part in these incursions; and therefore, since we read (Gen. xxv. 6.) that Abraham sent away the sons of his concubines, particularly the sons of Keturah, (one whereof was Midian, the father of the Midianites) eastward, into the east country, it may not improbably be inferred, that by the children of the east, in this history of Gideon, are denoted the descendants of the other sons of Keturah, and of the other brothers of Midian, who had settled themselves in the eastern parts adjoining to Midian. *Wells's Geography of the Old Testament.*

†² Who this prophet was, we have no manner of intimation given us. The Jews generally fancy that he was Phineas; but Phineas must by this time have been above two hundred years old, which far exceeded the stated period of human life then. St Austin is of opinion, that he was the same with the angel which soon after appeared to Gideon; but it is far more likely, that God still continued other prophets among the Israelites, besides the high priest, to put them in mind of their duty, and to call them to repentance,

when they forsook him: For, from the case of Deborah, who is said to have had the Spirit of prophecy, it appears, that, at least in extraordinary cases, God failed not to raise up such persons among them. It is remarked however of this prophet (be he who he will), that he gave the Israelites no hopes of the Divine assistance, but only upbraided them with their sins. However, when he tells them, that their calamities was occasioned by their idolatry, he plainly intimates, that if they would return to the true worship of God, he would again look graciously upon them, and deliver them; and accordingly we find, that the history of their deliverance immediately follows. *Patrick's and Le Clerc's Commentaries.*

†³ That he was not a mere created angel, is plain from the incommunicable name Jehovah, which he assumes, and whereby he suffers himself so frequently to be called, Judges vi. 14, 16, 23, 24, 25, 27. And therefore the Jews, according to their targum, which styles him the "word of the Lord," look upon this angel, not merely as an heavenly messenger sent from God, but as the Son of God himself appearing in the form of an angel. *Patrick's Commentary.*

†⁴ Gideon was of the family of Abiezer, of the tribe of Manasseh; and so the Ophrah where he dwelt, must be understood to be situated in the half tribe of Manasseh, on the west side of Jordan, and for this reason it is styled Ophrah of the Abiezrites, (Judges viii. 32) to distinguish it from another Ophrah that lay in the tribe of Benjamin. *Wells's Geography of the Old Testament*, vol. iii. c. 6.

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ving boiled a kid, and made some unleavened cakes, he spread a table, and set them before him; but the angel ordered him to take them thence, and place them upon a rock hard by, and so pour the broth upon them, which, though it might seem a little strange, Gideon did; and as soon as the angel had touched them with the staff that was in his hand, immediately there issued fire out of the rock, which consumed them, whilst himself, at the same time, vanished out of sight.

Convinced by this miracle that it was a messenger from heaven who appeared to him, Gideon began to fear (as the notion then was) that he should not long survive it; but being assured by the angel (though then invisible) that no harm should befall him, he built a monument, which he called *Jehovah-shalom*, i. e. "the Lord of peace," in commemoration of this gracious interview; and, being that night admonished in a dream to destroy the altar of Baal, and cut down the grove that surrounded it; to build an altar to God upon the top of this wonderful rock, and to offer a burnt-sacrifice to him with one of his father's bullocks, he readily obeyed: And, taking ten of his father's servants with him, demolished the one and erected the other by next morning; choosing the night to do it in, that he might meet with no obstruction. On the morrow, when the people understood that Gideon was the person who had put this affront upon Baal, they came and demanded him of his father that they might put him to death; but instead of complying with their demand, his father's answer was, "That if † Baal was a god, it was his business, and not theirs, to avenge his own quarrel;" and from this answer (wherewith he appeased the tumult) Gideon ever after obtained the name of *Jerub-baal*, i. e. "the opposer of Baal."

About this time the Midianites and their company, passing over the river Jordan, came and encamped in †² the valley of Jezreel; upon which Gideon, being moved by a Divine impulse, summoned all those of his own family to take up arms first, and then sent messengers to several adjacent tribes, exhorting them to shake off the yoke of the Midianites and to join with him; which accordingly they did, and came in such numbers, that in a short time his army amounted to two and thirty thousand men, though small in comparison of the enemy's forces, which consisted of no less than a hundred and thirty-five thousand.

As soon as each tribe's complement of men was arrived, Gideon (being willing to satisfy them, that he did not act this on his own head, but was the person appointed by heaven to be their leader and deliverer) desired of God to give them some token of his commission; and the token which he made choice of was—That, upon his laying a fleece of wool on the ground, †³ the dew might be upon the fleece only, and the earth

† It is generally supposed that Gideon's father had been a worshipper, if not a priest of Baal; and therefore it is not unlikely that he had at this time been convinced by his son, that God had given him a commission to recover his people, and to begin with this reformation; and this made him appear so boldly in his son's cause, because he knew it was the cause of God. *Pool's* Annotations, and *Patrick's* Commentary.

†² The city of Jezreel (which gave name to the valley) belonged to the half tribe of Manasseh on the west of Jordan, and lay in the confines of that half tribe and the tribe of Issachar, as appears from Josh. xix. 18. In the history of the kings of Israel this city is frequently made mention of, where, by reason of the pleasantness of its situation, some of them had a royal palace, though their capital was Samaria. The vale of Jezreel (which, as we said before, is now called the plain of Esdraelon) is, according to Mr Maundrell, of a vast extent, very fertile, but uncultivated,

and only serving the Arabs for pasturage: But some have supposed that the valley of Jezreel here mentioned denotes some other lesser valley, lying between Mount Hermon and Mount Gilboa. *Wells's* Geography of the Old Testament, vol. ii. c. 6.

†³ He supposed that the dew which distilled from heaven was a Divine gift, (as the Scripture after testifies), and therefore he desired that it might be directed by God, that though it commonly falls everywhere, by his extraordinary Providence it might now water only his fleece. Some are apt to think that he chose a fleece for his purpose, not only because it was ready at hand, but the better to express how the land was shorn by the Midianites, even as the sheep had been by him; that when he begged the dew (as a sign of the Divine favour) might fall upon the fleece, it was to represent the kindness of God to him; and when he begged it might fall upon the whole ground, to represent his favour to all the people. But there

round about it be dry, which accordingly happened; and then, inverting the former manner, he desired that the fleece might be dry, while the ground all around it was wet; which accordingly came to pass likewise. Confirmed by these signs that it was the will of God that he should enter upon action, Gideon marched directly to the camp of the Midianites, who then lay in the plain of Jezreel; but, before he came thither, God rightly foreseeing that if this army conquered the Midianites, they would vainly impute it to their own courage or numbers, and not to his assistance, ordered Gideon to make proclamation in the camp, that whoever was diffident of the success of the undertaking should have liberty to return home: Whereupon two and twenty thousand quitted the field, so that ten thousand only remained with him. It might be thought possible, however, for these ten thousand to defeat the army of the Midianites; and therefore God, resolving that the glory of the whole victory should be accounted his own, ordered Gideon to † lead the soldiers down to the water to drink, where he would give him a signal what men were fit for his purpose, and what not; and the signal was this,—That they who †² took up water in their hands and lapped it should go with him; but they who laid themselves down to drink should be dismissed; which experiment reduced them to no more than three hundred.

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i. to the end
of Ruth.

These three hundred men he ordered to hold themselves in readiness, and to have every one a trumpet, a lamp, and an empty pitcher to conceal the light, which the lamp would otherwise give; and, while they were providing themselves with these, he took his servant with him and went down to the enemy's camp, where he heard a Midianite relating his dream to his companion, which the other interpreted in Gideon's favour; so that returning to the camp, he drew his men out, and dividing them into three companies of an hundred men each, he came upon the enemy †³ in the dead time of the

is a farther reason why he might desire to have the miracle inverted: For, as it is in the very nature of the wool to draw moisture to it, some might be apt to think that there was no great matter in this; and therefore he requested of God a second miracle, which was contrary to the former. *Patrick's Commentary.*

† Mr Le Clerc is of opinion, that the sacred historian has omitted one circumstance, which, nevertheless, in the very nature of the thing is implied, viz. that Gideon, when he led his men down to the water, did forbid them to make use of any cup, or pot, or such like thing: For he thinks it incongruous (as well he may) that, among such a number as ten thousand men, no one should be furnished with some drinking vessel or other. But then, had any of these been permitted to be used upon this occasion, the experiment could not have been made. *Comment. in Jud. vii. 6.*

†² Interpreters are at a sad puzzle to conceive for what possible reason God made a distinction between the soldiers who lapped water in their hands, and those that laid themselves down to drink. Some of the Jewish doctors are of opinion, that all, except the three hundred who lapped, had been accustomed to the worship of Baal, which they unwarily discovered by their kneeling to drink: But this is a groundless and far-fetched conceit. The notion of those who impute these three hundred men's lapping, some to their sloth and laziness, and others to their timorousness and the great fear they were in of being surprised by the enemy, is of no more validity: For though

God, if he thought fit, might have employed the most dastardly among them upon this expedition, that the glory of the victory might entirely redound to himself; yet since, as we are told, all the fearful persons were dismissed before, and since it but badly befits the character of the courageous to be lazy; this action of lapping is rather to be accounted a token of their temperance and of the nobleness of their spirit, which made them so desirous to engage the enemy that they would not stay to drink, but (though they were very thirsty) contented themselves to moisten their mouths, as we say, with a little water; whereas the rest indulged themselves so far as to drink their belly-full. But, after all, the true reason and design of this method seems to be only this,—That God was minded to reduce Gideon's army to a very small number, which might very likely be done by this means. For, as the season of the year was hot, and the generality of the soldiers weary, thirsty, and faint, it was most probable that they would lye down (as indeed they did) and refresh themselves plentifully, and scarce to be expected, that any great number would deny themselves in this matter. *Patrick's Commentary, and Saurin's Gideon Defait les Madiantes.*

†³ The expression in the text is in the beginning of the middle watch: for though the Romans in after-ages divided the night into four watches, *Matth. xiv. 25.* yet, in the eastern parts, and in more ancient times, it consisted but of three, whereof the first began at six, and continued four hours. The second therefore is called the middle watch, and began at

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night. The watch-word was, "the sword of the Lord and of Gideon;" and, as every soldier had directions to do as their general did, they all broke their pitchers, brandished their lamps, and sounded their trumpets together.

The Midianites, hearing so many trumpets, and seeing so many lights at once, supposed themselves to be attacked by a formidable army; and so rising in a fright, and mistaking their friends for their enemies, † they fell upon one another, until they had put every thing into the utmost confusion. By this means Gideon, having obtained an easy victory, sent to the rest of the army, who upon his proclamation had withdrawn themselves, some to pursue the routed enemy, and others to secure the passes of the river Jordan, in order to prevent their retreat.

The passes however could not be all secured: So that, some of the enemy's troops having made a shift to cross the river, Gideon with his three hundred men pressed hard after them, while the other part of the army destroyed those who staid behind; and, having taken the two Midianitish princes, †² Oreb and Zeeb, they cut off their heads and sent them to Gideon.

Gideon, in the mean time, and his small party, were in full chase of two other princes of Midian, Zeba and Zalmunna; and when he came to Succoth and Penuel, two towns on the other side of Jordan, in the tribe of Gad, he desired of them some provision for his men because they were faint and weary: But, instead of giving him any refreshment, they ridiculed the smallness of his army, for which insolence he vowed to be revenged of them upon his return. Continuing his pursuit therefore with his small fatigued party, he came up with the enemy at Karkor, where the two Midianitish kings, thinking that they had now sufficiently escaped, were regardless of all danger: But Gideon, falling upon them unexpectedly, surprised and defeated them, and, having taken them prisoners, carried them in triumph with him unto Succoth, where he executed the vengeance (which he had threatened) by crushing the princes of that place to death under thorns and briars, killing the people of Penuel, and demolishing its fortifications. Zeba and Zalmunna in their march had laid all the country waste, and put many to the sword, otherwise Gideon was inclinable to have shewn them some mercy: But understanding, by their own confession, that they had slain his brethren at Tabor, he ordered his son Jether to fall upon them; but, as he was but a youth, and seemed a little timorous, †³ he himself dispatched them with his own hand, having first ordered them to be stripped of their royal ornaments, and their camels of their rich trappings and furniture.

eleven; so that we may suppose, that it was some time after this that Gideon alarmed the Midianitish camp; and the reasons why he chose this part of the night to do it in, are obvious, because the trumpets would then seem to sound louder, and the lights to shine brighter, and so both increase the consternation of the enemy, and conceal the smallness of his own army. *Pool's Annotations.*

† There might be several reasons for doing this: — Either because the night was so dark that they could not distinguish friends from foes; or because the thing was so sudden, that it struck them with horror and amazement; or because they suspected treachery, (as they might easily do, since the army consisted of several nations, *Judg. vi. 3.*) or because God had infatuated them, as he had many others on the like occasion. *Pool's Annotations.*

†² As the language of the Ishmaelites, the Midianites, and the Amalekites, who dwelt in Arabia, was originally the same, because they all descended from Abraham their common father; so we may infer, that

there was little or no difference in them at this time. Oreb in the Hebrew, signifies a crow, Zeeb a wolf; and these are no improper words to represent the sagaciousness, and fierceness which should be in two such great commanders. Nor was it an uncommon thing for great families, in ancient times, to derive their names from such like creatures, (hence the *Corvini*, *Gracchi*, *Aquilini*, &c. among the Romans) either as omens, or monuments of their undaunted courage and dexterity in military achievements. But, after all, it seems every whit as probable, that these were only nicknames which the Israelites gave these two princes of Midian, to denote their fierceness and rapaciousness of prey. *Bedford's Scripture Chronology*, lib. v. c. 3. and *Le Clerc's Commentary*.

†³ In ancient times it was as much a custom for great men to do execution upon offenders, as it is now an usual thing for them to pronounce sentence upon them. They had not then (as we have now) such persons as the Romans called *carnifices*; or public executioners; and therefore Saul bade such as

These great and glorious actions, in defence of his country's liberty, raised Gideon's name to such a height, that the people came, and voluntarily offered to settle the government upon him and his family; which he modestly and generously rejecting, and desiring only (as an acknowledgment of his services). to have the pendants or ear-rings taken in the plunder of the Midianites given him; the people readily consented, and over and above these, threw in the costly ornaments, and the robes of the kings, together with the golden † chains which were about the camels necks. The whole amounted to a prodigious value; and of these rich materials he made an ephod, and placed it in the city of Ophrah, as a monument only of his victory, though in after-times it came to be perverted to a bad use, gave occasion to a fresh apostacy, and proved the ruin of Gideon's family.

Gideon, while he lived, had several wives, by whom (in all) he had seventy sons, besides one by a concubine, †² whom she named Abimelech. As soon as his father was dead, this Abimelech, who was a bold aspiring youth, tampered with the people of Shechem, the place of his nativity, and where his mother's family had no small interest, to make him their king. They, by his persuasions, were inclinable to do it; and (that he might not want money to carry on his design) furnished him with some out of the treasury of †³ their god Baal-berith, wherewith he hired a company of profligate fellows to attend him. With these he repaired to his father's house at Ophrah, and having seized all his brethren (except Jotham, the youngest, who made his escape), he slew them all †⁴ upon one stone; and when he returned to Shechem, instead of meeting with detesta-

waited on him kill the priests; and Doeg, one of his chief officers, did it, 1 Sam. xxii. 17, 18. But the reason why Gideon would have had his son do this execution, was, that he might be early animated against the enemies of Israel, even as Hannibal is reported, when he was a boy, to have been incensed against the Romans. *Patrick's Commentary.*

† The word which we render *chains*, is in the original *little moons*, which the Midianites might wear strung together about their camels necks, either by way of ornament or superstition, because they, as well as all other people of Arabia, were very zealous worshippers of the moon. *Le Clerc's Commentary.*

†² What the names of his other sons, except Jotham the youngest, were, we have no mention made in Sacred Writ; but the name of this one is particularly set down, because the following story depends upon it: And not only so, but his mother perhaps might give him this name (which signifies *my father a king*) out of pride and arrogance, that she might be looked upon as the wife of one who was thought to deserve a kingdom, though he did not accept it: And it is not improbable that the very sense of this might be one means to inflame the mind of her son afterwards to affect the royal dignity. *Patrick's Comment.*

†³ The learned Bochart is of opinion, that the Baal here mentioned was the same with Beroë, the daughter of Venus and Adonis, desired in marriage by Neptune, but given to Bacchus; and that she gave her name to Berith in Phœnicia, where she was much worshipped, and thence translated a goddess into other parts. But though the word *Baal* (as he maintains) be frequently used in a feminine sense, yet it can hardly be imagined but that the sacred historian, if he had been minded to express a goddess, might have found out some way of distinguishing her; might have

called her (for instance) *Bahalah-berith*, the *Lady*, or *Goddess of Berith*, without making both the words of a masculine termination. And therefore the most simple and natural manner of explaining the name, is, to take it in general for the god who presides over covenants and contracts, to whom it belongs to maintain them, and to punish all those that violate them. For it is to be observed that the most barbarous as well as the most knowing, the most religious as well as the most superstitious nations, have always looked upon God as the witness, as well as the vindicator of oaths and covenants; that the Greeks had their Zeus Horkios, as well as the Latins their Jupiter Pistius, or Deus Fidius, or Fœcialis, whom they looked upon as a god of honesty and uprightness, always superintending in treaties and alliances. And for this reason, not improbably, the house of their god *Berith* was the citadel, the arsenal, and the treasury of the Shechemites, even as Plutarch informs us, that in the temple of Saturn, the Romans deposited both their archives and public wealth. *Bochart, Canaan, lib. ii. c. 17. Pool's Annot. in locum, Calmet's Dictionary under the word Baal-berith, and Jurieu, Histoire des Dogmes and Cultes, &c. part iv. chap. i.*

†⁴ This stone some will have to be an altar which Abimelech dedicated to the idol Berith, and erected in the same place where his father Gideon had destroyed his altar before; and so they account, that this slaughter of his sons was designed for an expiatory sacrifice of their father's crime in demolishing the altar and grove dedicated to that idol. But this is a little too far-fetched, though there is hardly any other reason to be given why they should all be murdered upon one and the same stone. *Patrick's Commentary, and Pool's Annotations.*

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tion for this unnatural murder, was, in a general assembly of the people, elected their king.

When young Jotham heard of this, he went upon Mount Gerizim, which overlooks the city of Shechem, and from thence, in a parabolical speech, represented to † the people his father's modesty and self-denial, in refusing to have the government settled on him and his family, which they had now conferred on one as much inferior in virtue and honour to Gideon, and his lawful sons, as the bramble is to the olive-tree, the fig-tree, or the vine; and then expostulating the injury done his family, and upbraiding them with their ingratitude, he appeals to their consciences, whether they had done right or not, and denounces a curse against them for their siding with Abimelech in all his wicked deeds.

Having thus delivered himself to the Shechemites, Jotham made his †² escape to Bear, where he lived secure from Abimelech's rage; and it was not long before his curse began to operate. For the people of Shechem * growing jealous and distrust-

† This is the first fable that we find anywhere upon record; and from hence it appears, that such fictions as these, wherein the most serious truths are represented, were in use among the Jews (as they are still in the eastern countries) long before the time of Æsop, or any other author that we know of. Various are the reasons that may be assigned for the first invention of them; but these two seem to be the principal: 1. Because men would suffer themselves to be reprehended in this guise, when they would not endure plain words; and, 2dly, Because they heard them with delight and pleasure, and remembered them better than any grave or rational discourses.

"The trees went forth on a time to anoint a king over them," (so that anointing was in use two hundred years before the first kings of Israel) "and they said unto the olive tree, reign over us. But the olive tree said, should I leave my fatness, wherewith by me they honour God and man," (because oil was offered in sacrifice to God, and fed the lamps of his house, besides all the other uses wherein it was serviceable to man) "and go to be promoted over the trees? And the trees said to the fig-tree, come thou and reign over us. But the fig-tree said unto them, should I forsake my sweetness, and my good fruit," (an apt representation of that content and fulness of pleasure which may be enjoyed in a private life, and cannot, without folly, be exchanged for the troubles and cares that men meet with in the managery of public affairs) "and go to be promoted over the trees? Then said the trees unto the vine, come thou and reign over us. And the vine said unto them, should I leave my wine, which cheereth God and man," (a form of speech imitated by heathen authors, especially by Virgil, (Georg. lib. ii.) where, speaking of some generous wine, he terms it—'Mensis, et Diis accepta secundis,' since wine as well as oil was used both in Jewish and Heathen sacrifices) "and go to be promoted over the trees? Then said all the trees unto the bramble, (the meanest of all trees, good for nothing but to be burnt, and therefore fitly representing Abimelech, from whom the Shechemites could expect no manner of benefit, but a great deal of trouble and vexation) "come thou and reign over us. And the bramble said unto the trees, if, in truth, ye anoint

me king, then come and put your trust in my shadow;" (an apt emblem of Abimelech's ridiculous vanity, to imagine that he should be able to maintain the authority of a king, any more than the bramble could afford a shadow or shelter) "and if not, let fire come out of the bramble, and devour the cedars of Lebanon." (Words that carry a lively image of Abimelech's ostentatious spirit, and menaces to take severe vengeance on the nobles of Shechem, such as the house of Millo, who had been chiefly instrumental in his promotion, in case they should desert him.) This is the parable; and in some measure its interpretation. The only difficulty is, to know whom these trees are set to signify. And here, some have thought, that by the olive tree, we are to understand Othniel; by the fig-tree, Deborah; and by the vine, Gideon; for, to the two former, they suppose that the offer of the kingdom was made for the services done their country, and by them rejected as well as by the last. But for this there is no authority; neither is there any necessity, in the explication of such fables, to assign a particular reason for every image that is drawn in them. It is sufficient, if we can but hit off their main intentment, which, in this of Jotham, was to convince the Shechemites of their folly in choosing a man for their king, who was no more able to protect them than a bramble was to cover other trees, that should resort to it, under the shadow of its branches. *Saurin's Dissertations, and Patrick's Commentary.*

†² This was a city that stood on the northern frontiers of the tribe of Judah, which did not acknowledge Abimelech for king, and therefore Jotham knew that he might have sure refuge and protection there.

* In the text, the expression is,—"Then God sent an evil spirit, or spirit of discord, between Abimelech and the men of Shechem," Judg. ix. 23. which, in Scripture, is an usual form of speech, and denotes not any positive action, but a permission only, or, at most, a direction from God. It is observed, however, that this manner of expression may possibly have given rise to some notions in the theology of the heathens, when they suppose that the furies are appointed by the gods to sow the seeds of discord among men.

Luctificam Alecto dirarum ab sedē sororum,

ful of their new king, were for apprehending and killing him, which made him leave the place, and escape for his life. As soon as he was gone, they set up another vile wretch, Gaal, the son of Ebed, to be their governor. Under his protection the people ventured out to reap the fruits of the earth, and having, upon this occasion, made themselves merry, they expressed their detestation of Abimelech, and none was more forward than Gaal to speak contemptibly of him, and to make his boasts what he would do with him if he could but once catch him. Zebul, whom Abimelech entrusted with his concerns in his absence, gave him intelligence of all that passed, and advised him to come with some forces before it was too late. Accordingly he marches all night, divides his army into four parts, and early in the morning had beset the city. Gaal, though a very coward, seeing matters reduced to this extremity, marched out with what forces he had, but was soon defeated and slain. Abimelech, next day, stormed the place, and killed all the inhabitants that came in his way; but some having betaken themselves to a fort belonging to the temple of their god Berith, he set fire to it, and destroyed them all together.

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During these times of confusion, the town of Thebez, not far distant from Shechem, revolted; and Abimelech being now flushed with victory, besieged and took it; but the inhabitants flying to a strong tower, he endeavoured to burn that, as he had done the other, but not with the same success; for while he was encouraging his men, and helping to set the gate on fire, * a woman threw down a piece of millstone upon him, which fractured his skull; so that finding himself mortally wounded, he called to his armour-bearer to put an end to his life, that it might not be said he died by the hand of a woman. Thus God, in his abundant righteousness, punished both Abimelech and the men of Shechem according to their deserts; and, within the space of three years after their crimes were committed, made them the instruments of each others destruction.

After the death of Abimelech, Tola, the son of Puah, an eminent man of the tribe of Issachar, undertook the government, and continued it for three and twenty years. He dwelt on Mount Ephraim, near the centre of the country, that the people might with more conveniency resort to him for judgment; and though there is not much recorded of him, yet he seems to have been a prudent and peaceable man; raised up to reform abuses, to put down idolatry, to appease tumults, and heal the wounds which were given to church and state during Abimelech's usurpation.

He was succeeded by Jair, a Gileadite, of the tribe of Manasseh, the first governor that was raised up out of any of the tribes beyond Jordan, and who, in the main, seems to have been more solicitous to † aggrandize his own family, than to mind the concerns

Infernisque ciet tenebris; cui tristia bella,
Iræque, incidiaque, et crimina noxia cordi.
And a little lower,
Disjice compositam pacem, sere crimina belli:
Arma velit, poscatque simul, rapiatque juvenus.
Virg. Æn. vii.

* Thus Plutarch relates, that Pyrrhus, at the siege of Thebes, was killed by a woman's throwing a tile upon his head; but there is something more remarkable in Abimelech's death by a stone, because, as he slew all his brethren upon one stone, for him to die by no other instrument, carried some stamp of his sin upon it. The manner of his death, however, puts me in mind of what the same author records of the Spartan general Lysander, who fell ingloriously under the walls of Haliartus. "Thus he died, says he, but not like Cleombrutus, who was slain while he was gloriously making head against an impetuous enemy at Leuc-

tra, not like Cyrus, or Epaminondas, who received a mortal wound while he was rallying his men, and securing to them the victory. These great men died in their callings. They died the death of kings and commanders: whereas he, like some common soldier, or one of the forlorn hope, cast away his life ingloriously; giving this testimony to the ancient Spartans, that they did well to avoid storming of walls; in which the stoutest man may chance to fall by the hand, not only of an abject fellow, but by that of a boy, or a woman, as they say Achilles was slain, in the gates of Troy, by the hands of the effeminate Paris." *Patrick's Commentary, and Plutarch's Comp. of Lysander and Sylla.*

† The reasons which the Scripture gives us to think, that he really did aggrandize his own family, are, 1st, Because he is said to have had thirty sons, that rode on thirty asses colts; for, as in those days,

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&c. or 4158.
Ant. Chris.
1413, &c.
or 1253.

of religion. For during his administration, the people not only worshipped Baalim and Ashtaroth, as they had frequently done before, but adopted the gods likewise of every neighbouring nation, of the Syrians, the Zidonians, the Ammonites, the Moabites, and the Philistines; so that God, being incensed against them, incited the Philistines and the Ammonites to invade them on all quarters in one and the same year. Nor did these people make their incursions only upon the tribes that were on the east side of Jordan; but, passing the river, gave the tribes of Judah, Benjamin, and Ephraim, no small molestation, and, by their sundry defeats, made them feel the weight of their power.

The Israelites, finding themselves not able to cope with such powerful enemies, grew sensible of their folly; and, to recover the protection of God, renounced all their idols, and betook themselves to his service in good earnest; whereupon, † his mercy returning with their repentance, he soon found out means to effect their deliverance.

There was at that time in the half tribe of Manasseh, which settled on the east side of Jordan, a man of note among his people, whose name was Gilead, of the family of that Gilead, the son of Machar, to whom Moses gave the (a) city of Gilead, from whence the family took their name. This man had by his wife several sons, and one †² by a concubine whom he named Jephthah; but when his sons grew up, and their father was dead, they expelled Jephthah, as having no right of inheritance with them, so that he was sent to seek his fortune, and at length settled in the †³ land of Tob; where, being

the Israelites had but few chariots, and were not allowed to keep many horses, the most honourable of them were used to be mounted on these creatures, which, in the eastern countries, were much higher and more beautiful than they are with us; 2dly, "They had thirty cities or villages, called after their own name, in the land of Gilead;" for as we read that Jair, the son of Manasseh, went and took the small towns of Gilead, and called them Havoth-jair, (Numb. xxxii. 41. and Deut. iii. 14.) so we may presume, that this Jair, who was afterwards judge of Israel, recovered the places which his ancestor conquered, and perhaps added some more to them, that each son of his might have one. *Le Clerc's Commentary.*

† This is the most remarkable repentance and reformation that we meet with in the history of the Judges; and it seems to be so serious, that, in the times of those three governors who succeeded Jephthah, we read nothing of their relapsing into idolatry. And as their repentance was sincere, so the expression of the Divine compassion towards them, viz. "that his soul was grieved for the misery of Israel," Judges x. 16. is the strongest that we meet with; though every one knows, that the Divine Nature is not capable of grief, properly so called, but the meaning is, that he quite altered his former intention, and in much mercy resolved, upon their repentance, to deliver them.

(a) Numb. xxxii. 29.

†² Several Jewish doctors are of opinion, that the word *Zonah* may signify either one of another tribe or one of another nation; and so Josephus calls *Jephthah*, ζῆνος παρὶ τῇ μητρί, a stranger by the mother's side. It is to be observed, however, that among the Jews, if such persons as were deemed strangers embraced the law, their children were capable to inherit among the rest of their brethren. Jephthah, indeed, complains of the hard usage he met with, but it was

upon this occasion, when his country he found stood in need of him; for had he been unjustly dispossessed of his right of inheritance before, we can hardly suppose, that a man of his courage and martial spirit would have sat down contented with his exclusion. It is not to be doubted, therefore, but that he "was the son of an harlot," properly so called: But then the question is, Why God should make choice of a person of his character for so great an instrument of his glory? To which it may be replied, 1st, That God has prescribed laws to men but none to himself; and can therefore alter his dispensations as he pleases, according to the circumstances and exigencies of things. 2dly, That as he chooses to act by second causes, he always makes use of such instruments as (all things considered) are properest for his purpose, without regard to any blemishes for which they themselves are not accountable; And, 3dly, That he might purposely dispense with the law in this case, to shew, that those who are basely born ought not to despond, but, by a virtuous and good life, expect a share of God's blessings. *Howell's History*, lib. iv. in the notes. [This reasoning of Howell's is not conclusive in support of the opinion that Jephthah was the son of a harlot properly so called. The son of such a woman was certainly excluded from the congregation of the Lord; and though it may be true that God has prescribed no laws to himself; it is surely inconceivable, that he should have encouraged a people backsliding of themselves, to despise his laws, by capriciously setting over them, as chief ruler, a man whom he had enjoined them to exclude from their society.] See *Pool's Synops.* Deut. xxiii. 2.

†³ We read nowhere else of this country, which very probably was not far from Gilead, upon the borders of the Ammonites, in the entrance of Arabia Deserta; or perhaps it is the same with what is called Ish-tob, (2 Sam. viii. 6. 8.) which was in Syria, and so near the Ammonites, that they hired forces from

a man of great courage and bravery, he was soon made the captain of a small army, with whom he used to make incursions into the enemy's country, and sometimes bring off rich spoils. From Judges i. to the end of Ruth.

The Ammonites had now raised a large army, with a design to invade the country of Gilead, and, as it is supposed, to lay a siege to Gilead itself. The Gileadites, on the other hand, were resolved to defend their country, and to that purpose had got together what forces they could; but then they were at a loss for a general. Jephthah, they knew, was a man of courage and conduct, who had signalised himself on frequent occasions against the enemy; and therefore, in a full assembly of their chiefs, it was resolved to send him an offer of the command of their army. Surprised at this sudden change, and remonstrating a little their former unkindness to him, he consented at last to accept of the command; but it was on this condition, that, if he happened to be successful in the war, they should establish him their governor for life, which they readily consented to, and solemnly ratified. Being invested with this power and authority, Jephthah sent ambassadors to the king of Ammon, to demand the reason of his invading the Gileadites; to whom that prince replied, that their land was his, and that the Israelites, in their passage from Egypt, had taken it from his ancestors, which he now intended to recover. Jephthah returned him, by other ambassadors, in answer, that if either conquest or prescription conferred a title, they had a just right to the country they possessed, since they took it, not from them, but from the Ammorites, and had for three hundred years been in quiet possession of it; but all would not do. The Ammonites were resolved upon a war, and Jephthah made all things ready to receive them: But before he took the field, he * made a vow, that, if he returned with victory, the first thing that came out of his house to meet him, he would certainly offer unto the Lord, which many think was the occasion of the sacrificing his own daughter.

However this be, it is certain, that when he returned out of the country of Ammon, where his battles were fought with success, he met with some disturbance at home; for the tribe of Ephraim not long after passed the river Jordan on purpose to pick a quarrel with him, because (as they pretended) he had not sent for them to join the army, and share in the victory. † At other times they had been noisy and clamorous enough, but now they proceeded so far as to threaten to burn his house over his head. Jephthah endeavoured what he could to pacify them with good words; but when he found that reasoning would not do, he fell upon them with his army, and put them to flight: And being resolved to hinder them from giving him the like molestation any more, he sent and secured all the passes over Jordan in their way home; so that, as fast as they came thither, if upon examination they owned themselves Ephraimites, they were immediately put to the sword; if they denied it, they had †² the test-word SHIB-

thence, as well as from other nations, to fight against David. *Patrick's Commentary.*

* To make a vow was an act of religious worship, and in itself no way culpable; nay, not only the Jews, but other nations looked upon it in this view: And therefore we find Livy so frequently telling us, that the Roman generals were wont to vow to Jupiter, or Apollo, or some other god, that if by his help they should prove successful, they would devote some part of the spoil they should take in the war, to his use, or build temples and dedicate them to his honour. *Patrick's Commentary.*

† Though Gideon had called the Ephraimites to assist in the pursuit of the Midianites, and had given them the advantage of plunder, and the honour of taking Oreb and Zeeb, two princes of Midian, prisoners; yet, because they were not called at first to the

battle, they took upon them to reprehend him very sharply, which he, like a prudent man, took patiently, and pacified them with good words. *Howell's History*, lib. iv. in the notes.

†² Nothing is more notorious, than that the people of the same nation, who speak the same language, differ very much in their pronunciation of it, in several parts of the country. In Palestine, the people in Galilee, and those that lived at Jerusalem, spake the same tongue, and yet, in the time of Christ, the latter could tell St Peter, that his "speech betrayed him," *Matth. xxvi. 73.* In Greece all spake Greek, and yet the Ionians, Attics, Dorians, and Æolians, pronounced very differently. And here, though the Gileadites and Ephraimites were all of one nation, yet the latter, we find, could not pronounce the letter *schin*. There were doubtless, therefore, many other words

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BOLETH given them, which (if they pronounced it SIBBOLETH) discovered their country, and cost them their lives; insomuch that, what in the field, and what on the banks of the river, no less than † two and forty thousand Ephraimites were slain.

Thus Jephthah, having delivered his country from the attempts both of foreign and domestic foes, lived the remainder of his days in peace, and after the administration of public affairs for six years continuance in all, he died, and was honourably buried in his own country.

He was succeeded by Ibzan of Bèthlehem, who, after he had governed seven years, was succeeded by Elon, of the tribe of Zebulon; and he, after he had ruled ten years, by Abdon, of the tribe of Ephraim, who ruled eight. Of these judges the Sacred History says nothing remarkable, only that some of them had a numerous issue, which is mentioned to shew that the government at that time was not hereditary.

During the administration of these judges, the Israelites enjoyed a peace of three and twenty years continuance; but when they relapsed into their old impieties, God suffered the Philistines to invade and oppress them, whereupon Samson's valiant acts began to display themselves. He was the son of Manoah, †² of the tribe of Dan, and of a mother, whose name we no where find in Scripture. This woman was a long time barren, and had no children; and therefore, when an angel appeared to her, while she was alone, and gave her assurance that she would be mother of a son, who was to be a †³ Nazarite from his birth; to drink no wine or strong liquor, and †⁴ never have his hair shaved; upon her telling her husband these glad tidings, he requested of God to vouchsafe him a sight of the same heavenly messenger, which accordingly God granted him; and when Manoah entreated the angel to accept of a small entertainment, which he chose rather to have converted into a sacrifice, Manoah made ready a kid, and wine for libations; and having placed them upon an altar made of stone, as the smoak of the sacrifice began to ascend, the †⁵ angel mounted up in the flame, and so disappeared.

which they could not frame their mouths to speak, as the Gileadites did, but this one was chosen because it was fit for their purpose. For as *Shibboleth* signifies *floods of water*, the Gileadites, when they saw any Ephraimite appear, might put this test to him, and bid him say, "Let me pass over the water." *Le Clerc's* and *Patrick's* Commentaries.

† This was a terrible slaughter for one tribe to make of another; but the Ephraimites seem to have deserved it as a just punishment of their pride and insolence; in despising so great a man as Jephthah, who had saved all the people of Israel, and threatening to destroy his house after so glorious a victory; in reviling their brethren likewise; invading them without a cause, and attempting to drive them out of their country. *Patrick's* Commentary.

†² As the tribe of Dan lay bordering upon the Philistines, it was most exposed to their incursions and invasions; and therefore God, out of that tribe, chose Samson to be a scourge to them, and a revenger of his people, which is very agreeable to the prophecy of Jacob when he blessed his sons a little before his death. "Dan shall be a serpent by the way, an adder by the path, biting the heels of the horse, so that his rider shall fall backward," Gen. xlix. 17.

†³ A Nazarite was one who, under the Levitical law, either to attain the favour, or avert the judgments, or acknowledge the mercies of Almighty God, vowed a vow of particular purity, and separated himself (for so the word signifies) in an extraordinary manner to the service of God. The time of this vow

lasted usually for eight days, sometimes for a month, and in some cases for the person's whole life. During this time, the persons (for women, as well as men might enter into this engagement) bound themselves to abstain from wine and all strong liquors; not to cut the hair of their heads; not to come near a dead corps, nor assist at a funeral. Nay, the matter was carried so high, that if any happened to die suddenly in their presence, the whole ceremony of this separation was to begin a-new. After the time that their separation was ended, they were to offer such sacrifices as the law appointed, and then, being absolved from their vow by the priest, they might drink wine, and use the same freedom that other people did. Samson's Nazaratism (to which he was consecrated by his parents) was to last the whole term of his life; but his frequent intercourse with the Philistines, and the great havoc and slaughter that he so often made among them, would induce one to think, that he had a particular dispensation exempting him from the observation of some of the foregoing rules. Vid. Numb. vi. *Patrick's* and *Le Clerc's* Commentaries upon it, and *Calmet's* Dictionary under the word.

†⁴ Long hair was esteemed very much among the Jews; and such persons as were made Nazarites by their parents, and consecrated to God from the womb, were required to wear their hair long and uncut, because it was a token, not only of beauty, but of majesty and veneration. *Howell's* History in the notes.

†⁵ Angels bodies, which the Platonists called *εχηματα*, or *vehicles*, are not subject to the laws of gra-

At the time appointed the Divine promise was accomplished, and the woman was delivered of a son, whom she named Samson. While he was yet a youth, the spirit of God began to appear in him, and to exert itself in some notable exploits and feats of activity, in what was called † the old camp of Dan (lying between †² Zorah and Esh-taol), the place where he was born. When he came to man's estate, he fell in love with the daughter of a Philistine, who lived at Timnah; and though his parents did not so well approve of the match, because she was sprung from an idolatrous family, yet, such was their tenderness for their son, that they indulged his passions, and went both of them with him to †³ Timnah to treat about the marriage. As they were on their journey, and Samson was straggling a little from the company, all on a sudden a young lion came running at him with open mouth; but he took it, and slew it with as much ease as if it had been a kid; and some time after, as he passed that way, (which was when his father and mother went with him to solemnise his nuptials), he turned aside to see what was become of the lion's carcase, and to his great surprise found a †⁴ swarm of bees, and some honey in it, which he took, and gave part of it to his parents, but did not tell them from whence he had it.

It was customary in those days to continue the nuptial entertainment for seven days; and to do the bridegroom greater honour, his wife's relations had brought †⁵ thirty of their prime youth to bear him company, to whom (as the manner then was) he propounded a riddle, †⁶ which if they could explain in the time that the feast lasted, he

vity as ours are. After our Saviour's resurrection, the history of the Gospel informs us, how immediately, and in an instant, his body could move from place to place; and therefore it is no wonder that Manoah and his wife should discover the person that appeared to them to be an angel, by the manner of his ascension. *Le Clerc's Commentary.*

† This camp of Dan was probably that place where the Danites made their encampment, in their expedition and enterprise against Laish, Judges xviii. 11. for it is not at all likely that the Philistines, who had the Israelites at that time entirely under their subjection, should suffer them to have any standing camp. And this, by the bye, is a good argument, that the story of Micah, and of the Danites expedition, was transacted before Samson's time, though the compilers of the Bible have placed it after. *Howell's History in the notes.*

†² Both these were towns in the tribe of Dan, whereof Zorah lay on the frontiers of Judah; and for this reason Rehobqam, upon the revolt of the ten tribes, seems to have kept this place, though lying in one of these tribes, and to have fortified it for a barrier-town on that side of the kingdom of Judah; as he did also Aijalon, another town belonging to the same tribe. *Wells's Geography of the Old Testament*, vol. ii. chap. vi.

†³ It is not improbably thought, that the place which is called Timnah, Josh. xv. 10. and Timnatha, Josh. xix. 43. was the same with this. It was assigned at first to the tribe of Judah, but afterwards to the tribe of Dan, and was in all likelihood the place whither Judah, the patriarch of the tribe that was called after him, went up to his sheep-shearers, Gen. xxxviii. 12. *Wells's Geography. ibid.*

†⁴ Bees are observed by Aristotle and others to abhor stinking smells, and to abstain from flesh; which has made some think it strange, that a swarm

of bees should be found in the carcase of a lion: but it is no hard matter to suppose, that either time had consumed, or birds and beasts devoured all the flesh, so that nothing was left of the lion but the skeleton, in which the bees did not breed, (for the notion of insects breeding in that manner is now quite exploded) but only settled themselves when they swarmed, as they have sometimes done in dead mens skulls, and in their tombs. *Bochart's Hieroz. part ii. lib. iv. c. 10. and Le Clerc's Commentary.*

†⁵ During the time of the marriage feast, which for a virgin lasted seven, but for a widow only three days, it was customary among the Jews, to have a chosen set of young men, whom the Greeks call paranymphs, and the Hebrew scheliachim, to keep the bridegroom company, as also a certain number of young women were about the bride all this time. These young men were generally of the bridegroom's relations and acquaintance; but at Samson's marriage they belonged to his wife's family, (and were sent, as some of the Jews think) not so much to do him honour at the time of his nuptials, as to be a guard over him lest he should make any disturbance, of which the Philistines were afraid when they understood that he was a man of so much strength and might. *Lamy's Introduction*, lib. i. cap. 14. and *Calmet's Disser. sur les mariages des Heb.*

†⁶ This riddle which Samson proposed at his nuptials, is somewhat singular. As the men and women were not permitted to be together in these eastern countries, they could not amuse themselves with their conversation; and as they could not spend their time merely in dull eating and drinking, it is hence presumed that their custom was in their computations and feasts, (as we find it afterwards among the Greeks) to propose questions, and hard problems to be resolved, in order to exercise the wit and sagacity of the company. *Selden de Uxore Hebr. lib. ii. c. 16.*

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obliged himself to give them thirty suits of clothes, and an equal number of shirts; but if they could not, they were to forfeit the like to him. The words of the riddle were, "Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness;" which so puzzled the young men, that they could not for their hearts devise what it meant; and therefore applying themselves to Samson's wife, what with threats, what with entreaties, they prevailed with her to get the secret out of her husband; which when, with much importunity, she had done, she told it them, and they, at the conclusion of the feast, gave him to understand that they knew it. He told them, however, by whose information they had it, and being desperately enraged, went down to † Ashkelon, a city of the Philistines, where having slain †² thirty men, he gave their clothes to those that expounded the riddle; but taking the thing very ill of his wife, he left her, and went down to his father's house, while she, in his absence, was married to one of the young men that had been his companions all the wedding-week.

As soon as his resentment was abated, and his anger appeased, Samson took a kid for a present to his wife, and went to her father's house, with a full purpose of being reconciled to her; but to his great amazement was denied admittance to her room, and told by her father, that, upon presumption he had quite forsaken her, he had married her to one of his companions, but had another daughter younger, and more beautiful, that was at his service. This answer was far from satisfying him; and therefore, imagining that the affront was not so much the act of his father-in-law, as the general contrivance of the Philistines, he turned about short, and vowed revenge, which he afterwards executed in the following manner.

By some means or other, he got together a multitude of foxes, to the number of three hundred; and tying them two and two together by the tails, with a lighted torch between each pair, he turned them into the standing corn at different places, and so not only set the fields on fire, but the vine and olive yards likewise, insomuch that the whole country was in a blaze. When the Philistines understood that it was Samson who had done this, in revenge to the affront which his father-in-law had put upon him, they came in a body, and fired the house over his father's head, and so burnt him and Samson's wife together. This was a fresh provocation, for which Samson threatened to be revenged; and, thereupon, without any ceremony, fell immediately upon them, and †³ slew a great number of them.

But as to this riddle of Samson's, some people are apt to find exceptions. The opposition they say is manifest, in the former part of it, but not in the latter; for weakness is opposed to strength, not sweetness, whose opposite is bitterness or sharpness. But Bochart has ingeniously observed, that these two words strong and sharp, are oftentimes used promiscuously. For in the Arabic language, the word *Mirra*, which signifies *strength*, comes from *Marra*, which signifies to be *sharp* or *bitter*; and so it is in the Latin, where *acer* a sharp man, is as much as valiant man, one who eagerly (as we speak) engages his enemy, and (what is more) we find in some of the best authors, this particular epithet applied to lions,—Genus acre leonum, Ovid. Fast. And therefore the antithesis of the words is this,—“Food came from the devourer, and sweetness from what is eager or sharp,” i. e. violent and fierce. *Patrick's* and *Le Clerc's* Commentaries.

† It is a city in the land of the Philistines situated between Azoth and Gaza, upon the coast of the Mediterranean Sea, about five hundred and twenty furlongs distant from Jerusalem. It is said to have been of

great note among the Gentiles, for a temple dedicated to Derceto, the mother of Semiramis, here worshipped in the form of a mermaid; and for another temple of Apollo, where Herod, the father of Antipater, and grandfather of Herod the Great, served as priest. The place subsists to this day, but is now very inconsiderable. Some mention there is made of the wine of Askelon, and the cypress-tree, (a shrub that was anciently in great esteem, and very common in this place) but modern travellers say no such thing of it now. *Calmet's* Dictionary under the word, and *Wells's* Geography of the Old Testament, vol. iii.

†² It may well be questioned, upon what occasion Samson could meet with thirty Philistines, all clothed in their new and best attire, even though we allow that he went with a disposition to pick a quarrel with them, and slay them; but then it is but supposing, that at this time there was a merry-making either in the fields, or in the city at some public solemnity, when great companies used to be gathered together, and appear in their best apparel, and the thing is done. *Patrick's* Commentary.

†³ The words in the text, according to our trans-

Samson, being conscious to himself, that he must have highly provoked the Philistines by this last slaughter of them, took up his residence thenceforwards on the † top of the rock Etam, which was in the tribe of Judah. Hereupon the Philistines came down with an armed force, and demanded Samson to be delivered up to them. The people of Judah, fearing the consequence of this invasion, detached a body of three thousand men to Samson; who, after they had expostulated the injury he had done them in provoking their enemies so highly, told him, in plain terms, that they were come to seize, and deliver him up to the Philistines.

Samson submitted to have himself bound, (which was done with new strong cords) upon condition, that they themselves would not side with the enemy against him; and so being brought to the place where the Philistines were encamped, they now thought they had him secure, and therefore ran out with joy to receive him. But as they came near him, he snapped the cords asunder, and happening to espy a fresh jaw-bone of an ass, he made use of that for want of a better weapon, and therewith slew no less than a thousand men; from which achievement the place was afterwards called, either simply *Lehi*, i. e. the *jaw-bone*, or *Ramah-Lehi*, the *lifting up of the jaw-bone*. Fatigued with this fight, and being now excessive thirsty in a place where no water was to be had, he made his supplications to God, and God immediately caused a fountain of delicious water to issue from an hollow rock, adjacent to Lehi, wherewith Samson allayed his thirst, and was revived; and from this event the place was called *En-hakkor*, the *well of him that prayed*, ever after.

After this action Samson made nothing of the Philistines, but went openly into †² one of their cities called Gaza, and took up his lodging in a public house of entertainment. The governor of the place had soon intelligence of him, and sent guards to beset the

lation are, “And he smote them hip and thigh with a great slaughter;” Judg. xv. 8. But the words in the original will admit of this signification, “He smote them with his leg on their thigh, and gave them great hurts or wounds;” and to justify this sense, a learned commentator supposes, that there was at this time, somewhere among the Philistines, wrestling matches, and other rural exercises, to which every one was invited, and that Samson among the rest might go thither; that there he threw great numbers of the Philistines, who perhaps might value themselves upon their activity that way; and in the midst of the grapple with them, broke their thighs with a kick or twist of his leg. If this supposition be right, the phrase, *Crus femori impingere*, seems to be much the same with what the Greeks call *σκειλιζειν* or *ἀποσκειλιζειν*; for, though this kind of exercise grew into high esteem among the Grecians, who were so famous for their gymnastic sports; yet, that wrestling was an exercise not unknown among the people of the east, is manifest from Gen. xxv. 26. xxx. 8. xxxii. 24. This our commentator offers but as a conjecture indeed; but it seems much more feasible than the interpretation either of the Vulgate or Chaldee paraphrast. *Le Clerc* in locum.

† This was a strong place in the tribe of Judah, (as Josephus relates) to the top of which no more than one man could come a-breast, and therefore easily defensible; by all this, however, and what follows in this history of Samson, it is plain, that he had no commission from God, nor was moved by any extraordinary impulse to make open war (as did Gideon, Jephthah, and others) for the deliverance of Israel

from the yoke of the Philistines, but only to weaken them and keep them in awe, that, out of dread of him, they might be less cruel in their oppression; and that this was all that God intended to do by him, is pretty plain from the words of the angel, Judg. xiii. 5. “He shall begin to deliver Israel.” *Patrick's Comment.*

†² This city was, by Joshua, made part of the tribe of Judah, but, after him, it fell into the hands of the Philistines, and was one of their five principalities, situated between Raphia and Askelon, towards the southern extremity of the promised land. The advantageous situation of this place was the cause of the many revolutions to which it became subject. At first of all it belonged to the Philistines, but, in Joshua's time, was conquered by the Hebrews. In the reigns of Jotham and Ahaz, it recovered its liberty, but was conquered by Hezekiah. It was made subject to the Chaldeans, when they reduced Syria and Phœnicia, and afterwards fell into the hands of the Persians. They were masters of it, when Alexander besieged, took, and demolished it. It afterwards rose again, but not near of the same magnitude, under the name of Majuma, which underwent as many vicissitudes as the former. The kings of Egypt had it for some time in possession; Antiochus the Great took and sacked it; the Asmoneans, or Maccabees, took it several times from the Syrians; Alexander Jannæus, king of the Hebrews, destroyed it; Gabinius repaired it; Augustus gave it to Herod the Great; Constantine gave it the name of Constantia, with many independent privileges, in honour of his son; but the emperor Julian destroyed, and deprived it of all. *Calmet's Dictionary.*

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house, and to watch the gates of the city for his going out next morning; but Samson being informed of this, rose in the midnight, and taking the two gates of the city, gate-posts, bars, bolts, chain and all, he laid them on his shoulders, and carried them to the top of an hill, † that looks towards Hebron, and there left them.

At length a more fatal adventure than any of these befel him: For, falling in love with a beautiful woman named †² Dalilah, who lived in the vale of Sorek, which lay in the tribe of Judah, he was so infatuated to her, that he lost all regard to his own safety. The princes of the Philistines, observing his passion for this woman, came and promised her †³ a round sum of money, if she would learn of him, and discover to them, what might be the cause of this his wonderful strength, and †⁴ how he might be deprived of it. This she undertook to do; and failed not to employ all her art and solicitation, to get the important secret from him. For some time he amused her with fictions, and made her believe, that his strength consisted sometimes in one thing, and sometimes in another; first, that binding him with bands made of green withs, then, that tying him with ropes that had never been used, and again, †⁵ weaving his hair into tresses, and so filleting them up, would bereave him of his strength: But these were no more than mock stories, for, upon trial, she found that all this signified nothing; and therefore betaking herself to all her arts and wiles, she complained of his falseness,

† The words in the text are, that “he carried them up to the top of a hill, that is, before Hebron.” Judg. xvi. 3. but the word which we render *before*, does equally signify *in the sight of Hebron*; and therefore, since the distance between Gaza and Hebron is no less than twenty miles, it is more probable, that the hill, where Samson left these gates, lay between the two cities, and in view of both, that the inhabitants of one city might behold them to their confusion, and they of the other to their encouragement to hope for a future deliverance. *Patrick's Commentary*.

†² It is certain, that Sorek was a place in the land of Judea, famous for choice wines, as may be gathered from Gen. xlv. 11. Isaiah v. 12. and Jer. ii. 21. and lay not above a mile and a half from Escol, from whence the spies brought a bunch of grapes for a sample of the fruitfulness of the country; but whether Dalilah, who is said to live here, was a woman of Israel, or one of the daughters of the Philistines, (who at this time were rulers in the country of Judah) or whether she was his wife, or an harlot only, is not expressed in her story. St Chrysostom and others are of opinion, that he was married to her; but if so, some mention, one would think, there should have been of the marriage ceremonies in this, as well as in his former wife's case: Nor can we think that the Philistines would have been so bold, as to attempt to draw her into their party, and to bribe her to betray him into their hands, had she been his lawful wife. It appears indeed, by her whole behaviour, that she was a mercenary woman, who would do any thing to get money, and accordingly Josephus (Antiq. lib. v. c. i.) calls her a common prostitute of the Philistines. *Patrick's Commentary*, and *Pool's Annotations*.

†³ The princes of the Philistines, from their five chief cities, Accarod, Askelon, Gaza, Azoth, and Gath, 1 Sam. vi. 17. are supposed to be five in number, so that if they made her a common purse, (as we say) of five times eleven hundred pieces, or five thousand five hundred shekels of silver, it would amount

to about three hundred and forty three pounds fifteen shillings. *Howell's History*, in the Notes.

†⁴ There is a good deal of probability in Josephus's manner of telling this story, viz. That while they were eating and drinking together, and he was caressing her, she fell into an admiration of his wonderful deeds; and, having highly extolled them, desired him to tell her, how he came so much to excel all other men in strength. For we cannot suppose that she came bluntly upon him all at once, and desired to know, (as it is in the text) “wherewith he might be bound and afflicted.” This had been discovering her wicked design against him at once, and defeating herself of an opportunity of betraying him; and therefore we must conclude, that the Sacred History in this place (as it frequently does elsewhere) gives us only the sum and substance of what Dalilah said to her paramour, without taking notice of all the cunning and artful speeches wherewith she dressed it up. *Le Clerc's Commentary*.

†⁵ We have followed in this passage (which indeed is a very obscure one) the notion of the learned Spencer, (de Leg. Mosis Rit. lib. 3. c. 6. Dissert. i.) concerning the hair of the Nazarite; but a learned commentator is of another opinion, viz. that Samson's hair being very long, was interwoven with the threads and warp of a web of cloth. And to this purpose he supposes, that in the room where he sometimes slept upon a couch, there might stand very near a loom, wherewith Dalilah, (as the custom then was) at her leisure hours, might work and divert herself, and that now, by his permission and connivance, she might take the locks of his hair, work it into the web, and, to hinder it from being pulled out, secure it with an iron pin thrust into the beam, but that Samson, when he awoke, took the loom along with him at his hair. And indeed, without some such suspicion as this, we cannot very well tell what to make of his going away with the pin of the beam, and with the web, Judges xvi. 14. *Le Clerc's Commentary*.

and upbraided him with his want of love, since he withheld a thing from her which she was so impatient to know : And thus, by daily teasing and importuning him, she prevailed with him at length to tell her the secret, viz. that “in the preservation of his hair (for he was a Nazarite from his birth) his strength and security lay.”

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There was something in his manner of telling her this, that made Dalilah believe she had now got the true secret from him ; and therefore she sent word thereof to some of the chief of the Philistines, who came and paid her the money they had covenanted to give her : And when she had cut off his hair, as he lay sleeping in her lap, they fell upon him, bound him, and put out his eyes ; and, having carried him to Gaza, they shut him up in prison, and made him † grind in the mill like a slave.

In process of time, however, his hair grew again, and with it his former strength returned : So that when several of the princes and nobility of the Philistines were met in a general assembly, to return thanks to their god †² Dagon, for having delivered their worst and sorest enemy into their hands ; and after they had feasted a while, and were now grown merry, they ordered that this same Samson should be sent for, that they might have pleasure in ridiculing his misery, and making sport with his blindness ; and accordingly Samson was brought. A large number of people was upon this occasion met together ; and the building, where the feast was celebrated, had only two large pillars to support the roof. After the Philistines therefore had insulted Samson as long as they thought fit, he desired the boy that led him, to guide him to one of those pillars, that he might rest himself a little against it. The boy did so : And Samson by this means having laid hold of the two main supporters, the one with his right hand and the other with his left, after a short ejaculation to God for the restoration of his former strength, he gave them such a terrible shake, that down came the house, and crushed no less than three thousand persons to death under its ruins, and Samson among the rest.

† Before the invention of wind and water-mills, men made use of hand-mills, wherewith to grind their corn ; and as this was a very laborious work, we find masters (especially in most comic authors) threatened their servants with it, in case of any delinquency. It was the work indeed of malefactors, as well as slaves ; and therefore it seems very probable, that in this prison where Samson was put, there was a public mill, as Socrates (Hist. Eccles. lib. v. c. xviii.) tells us there were several afterwards in Rome, in the time of Theodosius. So that from this, and some other circumstances, we may learn, that the Philistines purpose was, not to put Samson to death, (even as they had promised Dalilah they would not) but to punish him in a manner (viz. with blindness, hard labour, and insults) much worse, and more intolerable, than death itself. *Le Clerc's Commentary.*

†² The word *Dagon* is taken from the Phœnician root *Dag*, which signifies a fish ; and accordingly the idol is usually represented (as the heathens do tritons and syrens) in the shape of a woman, with the lower parts of a fish—“desinit in piscem mulier formosa supernè.”—For this reason learned men have imagined, that Dagon was the same with Decreto, which the people of Askelon worshipped, and near which place there was a great pond full of fish, consecrated to this goddess, from which the inhabitants superstitiously abstained, out of a fond belief that Venus, having heretofore cast herself into this pond, was metamorphosed into a fish. The learned Jurieu is of another opinion, viz. That Dagon, whose termination is

masculine, both in sacred and profane writings, is always represented as a male deity, and may therefore very properly be thought to be the Neptune of the ancients. The Phœnicians in particular (from whom both the Greeks and Romans borrowed their gods) living upon the sea-coast, and by their navigation and commerce gaining great advantages from that element, can hardly be supposed to want a deity to preside over it. Saturn, and his three sons, Jupiter, Neptune, and Pluto, were their principal idols : And as Saturn was their Moloch, Jupiter their Baal, and Pluto their Baal-Zebub ; so have we reason to presume, that Neptune was their Dagon. This, however, will not hinder us from supposing, that there might be two deities, a male and a female, worshipped in the same country, and under the same figure or form ; and that, as the pagan theology gives Jupiter a Juno, to be his consort in heaven ; and Pluto, a Proserpine to keep him company in hell ; so Neptune had his Amphitrite to be the partner of his liquid empire in the sea. According to this supposition, the Dagon of Gaza or Ashdod must be Neptune, and the Derceto of Askelon, a few leagues distant, Amphitrite, the daughter of Doris and Oceanus. Nor can it be thought incongruous to suppose farther, that the universal god of the sea might, in one place, be represented as a male (as at Ashdod) ; and in another (as at Askelon) as a female, to signify the fecundity of that element, which produces, and nourishes so many living creatures. *Le Clerc's Commentary, Cabinet's Dictionary, and Jurieu, Histoire des Dogmes et Cultes, par. iv. chap. vi.*

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† Thus died this hero in the midst of his enemies, as he desired; and when his relations heard of his death, they sent and †² took away his body, and buried it honourably in the sepulchre of his fathers.

THE OBJECTION.

“JUDGES, according to the notion that one would have of them, should be men of great gravity and sedateness; not only regular and religious themselves, but zealous promoters of virtue, and severe avengers of all wickedness and impiety; well skilled in the knowledge of the laws of God, and impartial in the administration of justice: But, instead of this, what do we meet with in this history of their lives but cruelty and perfidiousness, a profane neglect of the service of God, encouragement given to vice by their own examples, and such romantic accounts of some of their actions and adventures, as no human faith can swallow?

For what can we think of Ehud's left-handed doings, in assassinating Eglon king of the Moabites, under the wicked pretence of having a message to deliver to him from God? And yet, it must be owned, that this was not near so base as Jael's inviting Sisera (who was then at peace with her and her husband) into her tent, and, in circumstances that would have moved another's compassion, knocking him on the head, for which she merited to have her name recorded in a triumphant song.

The faith of several of these worthies is highly commended (*a*) by the author to the Hebrews; and yet we find Barak refusing to obey the Divine summons, unless Deborah would promise to go along with him; and Gideon requesting miracle upon miracle for the confirmation of his faith, though he had demonstration enough that the messenger came from God.

No man had certainly experienced more signal interpositions of God's goodness in his favour than this general had done; and yet how badly did he requite his gracious protector, in making an ephod to be an instrument of idolatry, and a means, in after-ages, to alienate the hearts of the people? And how implacable was his revenge, in crushing the princes of Succoth under thorns, and putting the inhabitants of Penuel all

† It is made a question among casuists and divines, whether Samson ought to have died in this manner, with a spirit of revenge and self-murder? St Austin excuses him indeed, but it is upon the supposition that he was urged thereunto by the inward motions of him, who is the Great Arbiter of our life and death; and St Bernard affirms, that if he had not a peculiar inspiration of the Holy Ghost to move him to this, he could not, without sin, have been the author of his own death; but others maintain, that, without having recourse to this supernatural motive, this action of his might be vindicated from his office, as being the judge and defender of Israel, and that he might therefore devote his life to the public good (as some heathens have merited the commendation of posterity by so doing), without having any thing in view but the death of his enemies, and the deliverance of his own people. *Calmet's Dictionary*, and *Saurin's Dissert. sur divers exploits de Samson*.

†² How the people of Gaza came to permit Sam-

son's relations to come and take away his body is not so obvious to conceive. In all nations there was formerly so much humanity, as not to prohibit enemies from interring their dead, nor did any of the Israelites join with Samson in his enterprizes; he stood alone in what he did: But this last slaughter which he had made among them, might have provoked them, one would think, to some acts of outrage even upon his dead body. It is to be observed, however, that instead of any acts of violence, they might perhaps be much humbled and mollified by this late disaster; and might fear, that if they denied him burial, the God of Israel, who had given him such extraordinary strength in his life-time, would not fail to take vengeance of them. And therefore, dreading his very corps, they were desirous to get quit of it (even as they were of the ark afterwards), and glad that any came to take such a formidable object out of their sight. *Patrick's* and *Le Clerc's Commentaries*.

(*a*) Heb. xi.

to death, merely for denying him some provisions, which, after all, he had no right to demand? From Judges
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of Ruth.

But, of all the men that judged Israel, commend me to Samson (and yet he is recorded among the worthies of old) for a complete pattern of lewdness and immorality, brutal strength, and brutal passions. It was a feat, one would think, great enough (though Josephus makes no mention of it) for Shamgar to kill six hundred of his foes with an ox-goad only; but what is this to the heaps upon heaps which Samson slew with the jaw-bone of an ass; and to the waters which gushed out at the socket of one of the teeth of the same jaw-bone so very opportunely to allay his thirst? A serviceable weapon this, both to destroy his enemies and refresh himself!

It may savour of spite and malice, perhaps, for him to set the country in a blaze, and burn down all the poor people's corn, merely because his wife, whom he left first, had played the jilt and betaken herself to another man; but it would really raise one's wonder to think where he could possibly get such multitudes of foxes as would do the work: And though we should allow that, after his hair was grown again, he might have strength enough to pull down the house where the Philistines were feasting; yet it seems hardly consistent with the rules of architecture, that a fabric, able to contain three thousand people, should have its whole weight supported by two pillars only.

The truth is, Samson's character at best is but a rough, an uncouth one; and some things are said of his exploits that seem to exceed the bounds of probability. But the wonder of all is, how he comes to be called a judge of Israel, who in all appearance was good for nothing else, but to kill the men and lie with the women: And, as easily may we conceive in what sense (a) "wine may cheer God," as how "the Spirit of the Lord might come upon him," whose actions were so diametrically opposite to every motion of that blessed inmate.

It may well exercise our wonder again, why none of these judges (whose office it was to reform all abuses) set about the extirpation of idolatry. The princes of Israel were certainly in the right (though Joshua in all his wars never did it) in having recourse to the oracle of God; and yet the instruments and offices of religion seem to be strangely blended, when the Levite in Micah's house pretended to answer the Danites every whit as well by a teraphim, which was no more than a pagan idol. And though the other Levite, mentioned in this history, might not have sufficient reason for cutting his dead wife into pieces, and sending them about to every tribe; yet certainly the Israelites acted a just part in espousing the quarrel: And therefore we cannot conceive why God should suffer the Benjamites, these bold contemners of all goodness, to be twice successful against them. And when, in process of time, the other tribes had got the better of them, it is still another paradox how their minds came to be so changed towards them, as to stick at no means (neither rapes nor murders) to recruit their tribe and effect their restoration.

Without entering therefore into the odd story which is told of Boaz and Ruth, and by what a shameless contrivance the young widow drew in the old man to marry her; we may adventure to say, that during this period the Israelites gave small proof of their being the peculiar people of God; and that the rulers, whom he is said to have raised up, were the very reverse of what they should have been (b) 'a terror to good works,' rather than evil, and promoters of wickedness and idolatry, rather than avengers to execute wrath upon those that were guilty of them."

JUDGES, which in Hebrew are *shophetim*, were a kind of magistrates, not much unlike the archontes among the Athenians, and the dictators among the Romans. The Carthaginians, a colony from the Tyrians, had a sort of rulers whom they called *suf-* ANSWER.

(a) Judg. ix. 13.

(b) Rom. xiii. 3, 4.

A. M. 2561, *fetes* or *shophetim*, much of the same extent of power; and Grotius, in the beginning of his commentary on this book of Judges, compares them to those chiefs that were in Gaul, in Germany, and Britain, before the Romans introduced another form of government. Their power consisted in a medium (as it were) between that of a king and an ordinary magistrate, superior to the latter, but not so absolute as the former. They were indeed no more than God's vicegerents, and every attempt to raise themselves to regal dignity, was looked upon as an usurpation upon his right who alone was to be considered as the Sovereign of the Hebrews; and therefore we find Gideon refusing this supreme authority when it was offered him; (a) "I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you; the Lord shall rule over you."

The honour of these judges lasted for life, but their succession was not always continued; for there were frequent interruptions in it, and the people lived often under the dominion of strangers, without any government of their own. According to common custom they were generally appointed by God. The gifts which he invested them with, and the exploits he enabled them to do, were a call sufficient to that office: But in cases of extreme exigence, the people made sometimes choice of such as they thought best qualified to rescue them out of their oppression, without waiting for any Divine designation.

Their right extended so far as to arbitrate in all affairs of war and peace, and to determine all causes; but then they had none at all to make any new laws, or lay any new taxes upon the people. Their dominion did seldom reach over all the land; but as it often happened, that the oppressions which occasioned a recourse to their assistance were felt in particular tribes or provinces only; so the judges, which were either raised or chosen to procure a deliverance from these grievances, did not extend their command over all the land in general, but over that district only which they were appointed to deliver.

In short, these judges were by their office the protectors of the laws, the defenders of religion, and the avengers of all crimes, especially of that of idolatry; and yet it must be owned that these were men of the like passions and infirmities with others, and that the great advantages which, under God, they procured for the Israelites, did not exempt them from that frailty which is incident to all human things.

The sacred story indeed tells us, that (b) "the Lord raised up judges, which delivered the Israelites" out of the hands of those that spoiled them, "and that when he raised them up he was with them," i. e. he communicated to them gifts, both natural and supernatural, according to the exigencies of his people, and in all their encounters with their enemies, attended them with a peculiar providence; but as well may we infer, that every general who fights the king of England's battles with success, should be a man of singular sanctity, as that those who were employed under God in that capacity should lead lives answerable to their high character. The power of working miracles is not always accompanied with an holy life. Many that shall say unto Christ, (c) "Have not we prophesied in thy name, and in thy name cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works," by reason of the iniquity of their lives shall find no acceptance with him: what wonder is it then to behold some, both kings and conquerors, even while they ride in triumph over the vanquished foes, tamely led captive by their own passions; so that while we cannot but admire them for their military exploits, we are forced to blame and censure them for their private conduct?

To mention one for all. Samson, a person born for the castigation of the Philistines, and to be a pattern of valour to all succeeding heroes, forgot himself in the arms of a Dalilah, and to the passion he had for a base perfidious woman, sacrificed those gifts which God had bestowed on him for the deliverance of his church, and so, to all ages,

(a) Judg. viii. 23.

(b) Ibid. ii. 16, 18.

(c) Matth. vii. 22.

he became a sad example of the corruption and infirmities of human nature. The like perhaps, in other respects, may be said of the rest of the judges; but then we are to remember, that they were persons under a particular economy of providence; that their conduct therefore is no direction to us, though their passions the Almighty might make use of (and therefore tolerate) for the accomplishment of his wise ends: "Howbeit they meant not so, neither did their heart think so," (a) as the prophet expresses himself upon the like occasion.

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Whether it be lawful, according to the right of nature and nations, for subjects to rescue themselves from tyranny by taking away the life of the tyrant, and to recover their country, which has been unjustly taken from them, by destroying the usurper, is a question that has been much debated, and what, at present, we need not enter into, for the vindication of Ehud's fact. It is the observation of the learned (b) Grotius, that the authority of the king of Moab was never legitimized by any convention of the Israelites, and consequently that they were at liberty to shake off his yoke, whenever they found a convenient opportunity. The only difficulty is, (c) whether a private man might make himself an instrument in effecting this in the manner that Ehud did? But to this it is replied, that Ehud was no private man, but acted by a warrant and authority from God; and to this purpose the history acquaints us, that (d) "when Ehud had made an end of offering the present," which the Israelites sent to Eglon, he was upon his return home, and "had gone as far as the quarries, which were by Gilgal." The word *pesil*, which is here rendered *quarries*, most commonly signifies (as indeed it is in the marginal note, as well as the Septuagint and Vulgate) *graven images*, which it is not improbable the Moabites had set up in this place, rather than any other, in pure contempt of the God of Israel, who had for so long a time made Gilgal famous by his presence in the tabernacle, while it stood there.

These images when Ehud beheld, his (e) spirit was stirred with a just indignation within him; and therefore, proceeding no farther in his journey home, he dismissed his attendants, and went himself back with a resolution to revenge this affront to God, as well as the oppression of his people.

That this his return was directed by a Divine impulse and instigation, is evident, I think, from the hazard of the enterprise he was going upon, and the many favourable occasions that accompanied the execution of it. For, how could any man in his senses think that a single person, as he was, should ever be able to compass the death of a king amidst the circle of his guards and attendants? How could he expect that an enemy, as he was, should be admitted to a private audience? or that, if he should prove so lucky, the king should be so far infatuated as to order all the company to quit the room? The killing the king must have been a great difficulty under these circumstances; but then, his making his escape had all the signs of an impossibility in it: And yet, without his escaping, the design of delivering his country must have been abortive. Upon the whole, therefore, it appears, that nothing but a Divine instinct could have given him courage to set about the thing; and therefore it was not all fallacy*, when he told Eglon, that "he had a message from God unto him," because God had sent, and commissioned him to kill him: So that what he did in this case, he did, not of himself, or from his own mere motion, but by virtue of an order which he had received from God, who had destined this oppressor of his people to this untimely kind of death.

This seems to be the only way whereby we can apologise for Ehud, in a fact which by no means is to be made a precedent, and without a Divine warrant is in no case to

(a) Isa. x. 7.

(b) *De Jure Belli et Pacis*, lib. I. c. 4. § 19.

(c) *Saurin's Dissert. sur Heglon tué par Ehud.*

(d) Judg. iii. 11. &c.

(e) *Patrick's Commentary.*

* [This is very absurd quibbling. Fallacy it certainly was, for it was calculated to deceive, and actually did deceive the corpulent and indolent king.]

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be justified. But as for the Holy Scriptures, wherein this action is related simply, and without either dislike or approbation, why should they suffer in our esteem upon that account, any more than Livy, Thucydides, or any other heathen author, for recording the various transactions (and some of them full as base and barbarous as this) that happened in the ages whereof they treat?

It is a mistake to think, that every person whom the Scripture mentions, nay, whom the Scripture commends in some respects, should in all others be faultless and unblameable; and it would be a much greater imputation upon the truth and authority of these Sacred Records, if the people of God were all made saints, and no black actions recorded of them; since it is the received character of a good historian, "that as he should not dare to relate any thing that is false, so neither should he conceal any thing that is true."

There is something peculiar in relation to the fact of Jael, and that is the words of the prophetess in her triumphant song: (a) "Blessed above women shall Jael, the wife of Heber, the Kenite, be; blessed shall she be above women in the tent;" which some look upon as a commendation of Jael, and consequently an approbation of the murder of Sisera: (b) But Deborah herein might only prophecy how, and in what manner, the Israelites would be affected towards that woman, by whose means (though perhaps not in the most commendable way) they had been delivered from a very dangerous enemy.

It is natural for us, when at any time we are rescued from an adversary by whom we have suffered much, and have reason to dread more;—it is natural, I say, for us to wish well to the person by whose means he was taken off; nor are we apt to consider the action according to the measure of strict virtue, by reason of the benefit which accrues to us thereby. Deborah might therefore mean no more than what were the common notions of mankind in a case of this nature. But, even † admitting her words to be a commendation of the fact, we might very likely perceive several reasons for it, if we had but a knowledge of some circumstances, which we may reasonably suppose, though the Scripture has not related them to us.

It is certain that the Kenites, descended from Hobab, the son of Jethro, father-in-law to Moses, were (c) at first invited to go with the Israelites into the land of Canaan, and were all along kindly treated by them. They indeed had no share in the division of the land, nor were they permitted to dwell in their cities; yet they had the free use of their country, and were allowed to pitch their tents (as their manner of life was) wherever they thought fit for the convenience of their cattle, though generally they chose to continue in the tribe of Judah. By this means a strict friendship interfered, and a firm

(a) Judg. v. 24.

(b) *Le Clerc's Comment.*

† One of our annotators has another way of accounting for the commendation which is given to Jael in Deborah's song, and that is by giving up the Divine inspiration of it. "It is not to be denied (says he) but that there are some words, passages, and discourses recorded in Scripture which are not Divinely inspired, because some of them were uttered by the devil, and others by the holy men of God, but mistaken: Such is the discourse of Nathan to David, 2 Sam. vii. 3. which God presently contradicted, v. 4, 5, &c. and several discourses in Job, which God himself declares to be unsound: "Ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath." Job xlii. 7. This being so (continues he) the worst that any malicious man can infer from this place is, That this song, though indicted by a good man or woman, was not Divinely inspired, but only composed by a person piously minded, and transported with joy

for the deliverance of God's people, but subject to mistake; who therefore, out of zeal to commend the happy instrument of so great a deliverance, might easily overlook the indirectness of the means by which it was accomplished, and commend that which should have been disliked. If it be urged that the song was composed by Deborah, a prophetess, and must consequently be Divinely inspired, the answer is, 1st, That it is not certain what kind of prophetess Deborah was, whether extraordinary and infallible, or ordinary, and so liable to mistake. But, 2dly, That every expression, even of a true and extraordinary prophet, was not Divinely inspired, as is evident from Nathan's mistake above-mentioned, and from Samuel's error concerning Eliab, whom (for his outward stature and comeliness) he took to be the Lord's anointed." 1 Sam. xvi. 6. *Pool's Annotations.*

(c) Numb. x. 29.

alliance was always subsisting between the Israelites and these people; whereas, between the Kenites and Jabin, there was no more than a bare cessation of hostilities; and though Heber and they continued neutral in this war, yet it was not without wishing well to their ancient friends, the Israelites, among whom they lived.

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Now it is a received maxim among all civilians, that where two compacts stand in competition, and cannot be both observed, the stronger should always have the preference. An agreement, for instance, says Puffendorf (*a*), that is made with an oath, should always supersede that which is made without one. It is but supposing, then, that the two depending treaties were of these different kinds, and this will be a circumstance in favour of Jael; but then if we may suppose farther, that Jabin was a grievous tyrant, and Sisera the chief instrument of his tyranny; this (*b*) (according to the opinion of some) will supply us with a full apology for what she did. "For there are certain monsters in nature, say they, in whose destruction all civil society is concerned. To do any thing to preserve them, nay, to let slip a proper opportunity of ridding the world of them (whatever terms we happen to be under with them), is to be false to what we owe to the whole community, under the pretence of fidelity to a base ally. When matters are come to such an extremity, that we must fight with men as we do with wild beasts, fallacy of any kind (which at other times is justly detested) may, in some measure, be then excused; nor have they, who in their dealings with others are regardless of all laws, both human and divine, any reason to complain, if, upon some occasions, they meet with a retaliation."

Jael, when she took the hammer and nail in her hand, might have this perhaps, and much more to say in her own vindication; but what absolves her most effectually with us is, the declaration which God had made in favour of the Israelites, by the wonderful defeat of Jabin's army, and the direction and impulse wherewith he excited her to dispatch his vanquished general. (*c*) Had she been left to herself, she would have been contented (one would think) to have let him lie still until Barak, who was in pursuit of him, had come up and surprised him. To fall upon him herself was an enterprise exceedingly bold and hazardous, and above the courage of her sex; and therefore we may conclude, that if it was God who inspired her with this extraordinary resolution, she was not to be blamed (notwithstanding the peace between Jabin and her family) for being obedient to the heavenly impulse; because all obligations to man must necessarily cease, when brought in competition with our higher obligations towards God*.

(*a*) *De Jure Nat. et Gent.* lib. iv. c. 2.

(*b*) Vid. *Le Clerc's* Commentary, and *Saurin's* Dissert. sur la D faite de Jabin.

(*c*) *Scripture Vindicated*, part iii.

* [This is very inconclusive reasoning. When our duty to God and to any individual man become inconsistent with each other, no one ever supposed that the latter is not to be superseded by the former; but I am not aware that any duty, either to God or to the Israelites, made it necessary for Jael to violate the laws of hospitality to Sisera the captain of the host of Hazor. The house of Heber her husband was equally at peace with Israel and with Jabin king of Canaan. The Kenites had indeed been much more indebted to the Israelites than to the Canaanites. Jael might therefore have refused to receive Sisera under her roof, because she could not protect him from his enemies should they come in pursuit of him, without violating an obligation much stronger than any under which she was either to him or to his master; but when he came under her roof she was surely to protect him as far as

that superior obligation would permit. He was not her personal enemy; and granting himself and his master to have been such tyrants as our author supposes, neither Jael nor any other private individual had a right to rid the world either of the sovereign or of his servant, by treachery! She might, without the breach of any duty, have received Sisera into her tent; but when she had received him, she could not, without incurring guilt of the deepest dye, murder him with her own hands! She could not indeed, with innocence, have *gone to the tent door*, and *voluntarily* betrayed him to Barak; but had she remained quietly within, and Barak had come to demand if he was there, she could not, without a breach of the higher duty which she owed to Israel, have preserved Sisera at the expence of a lie. It is perfectly in vain to attempt a vindication of her conduct; for God can never have authorised falsehood and treachery in such a case as her's with Sisera; nor do the words of Deborah at all imply an approbation of Jael's *moral conduct*. They are merely a wish or prayer that she

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or 1222.

Whoever looks into the catalogue of the worthies, whom the author to the Hebrews enumerates, will soon perceive, that as he is far from being exact in the order wherein he places them; so, by the faith for which he commends them, he means no more than a belief of what God told them, and ready obedience to his commands, whenever they were signified to them by a proper authority. Deborah was at this time a very remarkable woman, famous for the administration of justice, and determination of controversies among the people; but, notwithstanding this, it would have been rashness in Barak to have gone upon so hazardous an undertaking without any farther assurance than this. He did not absolutely refuse to go, nay, he offered to go upon the first notice, and for this his faith is commended in Scripture; but then he was minded to have some farther conviction that this notice was from God, and of this he could not have a better proof than if the prophetess herself would go and share with him the fate of the battle.

The enemy was as formidable an one as ever the Israelites had to encounter. "Nine hundred chariots of iron," when, (a) in times of greater military preparation, Mithridates had but one hundred, and Darius no more than two hundred in their armies, was enough to inject terror into any commander, whose forces consisted all of foot, and had no proper defence against these destructive engines. Good reason had he therefore to apprehend that the people would not so readily have enlisted themselves into the public service, had there not been a person of her character to appear at the head of it. She was a prophetess, and had received frequent revelations from God; and therefore, when the people saw her personally engaged in it, they would be the apter to be persuaded, that the expedition was by God's appointment, and therefore, without all peradventure, would be attended with success. And as Deborah's joining with Barak in the expedition, might be thought a good expedient to raise a sufficient number of forces; so might it equally be thought a means effectual, both to prevent their desertion, and to animate them to the fight: and accordingly (b) Josephus tells us, "That, when the two armies lay encamped, one within the sight of the other, the Israelites were struck with such a terror at the infinite odds of the enemy in numbers, that both general and soldiers were once upon the very point of shifting for themselves, without so much as striking a blow; but upon Deborah's assurance, that it was the cause of God, and that he himself would assist and bring them off, they were prevailed upon to stand the shock of the battle."

But there is one advantage more which Barak might more especially promise to himself in having Deborah's company in this expedition, and that is, that he might not want an oracle to resort to upon any emergency that might happen; because he was persuaded that God, who, by her means, had put his people upon this enterprise, would not fail, by her mouth, to direct him in the management of it. And, accordingly, in the grand point of all, viz. "when it was the properest time to engage the enemy," we find the benefit which he received from her company and conversation: (c) "Up," says she; "for this is the day in which the Lord hath delivered Sisera into thy hand. Is not the Lord gone out before thee? So Barak went down from Mount Tabor, and ten thousand men after him, and the Lord discomfited Sisera, and all his chariots, and all his host, with the edge of the sword."

The faith of those persons whose actions are recorded in the Old Testament, and fame commemorated in the new, consisted (as we said) in a firm belief of God's declarations, and a ready obedience to his commands; and how can we account Gideon culpable in either of these respects? When the angel of the Lord (or a person much superior, as some suppose) appeared to him, and brought him the news of God's having

might be rendered happy in this world, for the services that she had rendered to Israel; and perhaps it is not possible for the most upright mind, in such cir-

cumstances, to avoid the forming of such a wish.]

(a) *I.e.* Clerc's Commentary.

(b) *Antiq.* lib. v. c. 6.

(c) Judges iv. 14.

appointed him to deliver his people from the oppression of the Midianites, he seems indeed at first to be willing to decline the office, as conscious of his own incapacity, but desires withal to have some conviction given him (as who, upon the like occasion, would not have desired some?), that the messenger came from heaven, and was in reality no impostor; but when once he was satisfied in this, he never pretended to dispute the Divine command.

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He knew very well, that, when he pulled down the altar and grove of Baal, he must necessarily incense the whole country against him, and run the hazard of his own life; and yet, to do it more effectually, he took to his aid ten of his father's servants, and, that he might meet with no molestation, did it in the night. He knew very well, that when he sounded a trumpet in order to form an insurrection in the country, and to raise some forces to assert his nation's liberty, the Midianites would interpret this as an open declaration of war and come against him with an army as numerous as the sand on the sea-shore for multitude; but this he mattered not. He knew, that two and thirty thousand men, when he had raised them, were but a handful in comparison of the enemy; and yet, to see two and twenty thousand of these desert him all at once, and of the ten thousand that remained, no more left at last than bare three hundred; this was enough to stagger any one's mind, that had not a firm reliance on the word and promises of God. He knew, that three hundred men, had they been all giants, and armed cap-a-pee with coats of mail, would not be able to do any great execution against so numerous a foe; but when he found that, instead of being armed he was to attack the enemy naked, and, instead of swords and spears (as usual), his soldiers were to march in such a plight as was never seen before, with every one a light, a pitcher, and a trumpet in his hand; and when they came up with their enemy, were to break their pitchers, flourish their lights, sound their trumpets, and, instead of regular fighting, were only to shout and roar like so many men either mad or drunk; who but a Gideon, that had his faith confirmed by so many visions and miracles before, would have obeyed and put in execution such orders, as must have been thought wild, and frantic, and absurd, had they proceeded from any other mouth but God's?

Well therefore might he be allowed to request a repetition, nay, a multiplication of miracles, who was to have the trial of his faith and obedience carried to such an extremity. But the truth of the matter is, that it was not for his own sake that he made this request. He had been sufficiently convinced by the fire's breaking out of the rock at the touch of the rod in the angel's hand, that nothing was impossible to God, and that the means which he directed (how incongruous soever they might appear to men) would certainly not fail of their effect: But it was for the sake of his allies, that had just now joined him in this expedition, that he sent up his petition to God, to have them likewise satisfied; and therefore we may observe, that when all the quotas were come up and encamped together, then (very likely in the audience of the whole army) he requested of God, (a) "and said, if thou wilt save Israel by my hand, as thou hast said, behold I will put a fleece of wool in the floor," &c. It was for their sakes, I say, that the miracles were wrought, that they, who were to share in so hazardous a war, and "to destroy the armies of the aliens" with so small a force, nay, with no force at all, should have some assurance given them, that the God of Israel, who had so often promised their fore-fathers, that if they would continue in his favour, (b) "one of them should chase a thousand, and two of them put ten thousand to flight," was determined to assist them in this enterprise.

If ever this promise was literally fulfilled, it was in this defeat which Gideon gave the Midianites. But the inhabitants of Succoth and Penuel, it seems, made but a jest and ridicule of it, for which they received a condign punishment; but of what kind

(a) Judges vi. 37.

(b) Deut. xxxii. 30.

A. M. 2561,
&c. or 4189.
Ant. Chris.
1443, &c.
or 1222.

their punishment was, commentators are not so well agreed. (a) The word in the Hebrew signifies *threshing*, and thence it is generally inferred, that Gideon caused the principal men of Succoth, who had denied his soldiers provision in their distress, to be stripped naked, laid flat on the ground, † and a good quantity of thorns and briars heaped on them; that so, by cart-wheels, or other heavy carriages passing over them, their flesh might be pierced and torn, and themselves tortured, if not quite crushed to death.

This was a punishment, not much unlike what David inflicted on the Ammonites, after he had taken their city Rabbah; but the Ammonites, in my opinion, did not so much deserve it as these; for thus stands the case: Gideon was now in pursuit of two kings, who, after the general rout of their army, were making their escape with a party of five thousand men. Coming to two places in the tribe of Gad, who were Israelites as well as he, and equally concerned to have been venturing their lives for the public liberty, he is denied a small refreshment for his men, fatigued all the night with fighting for them, and, without some recruit, in no condition to continue their pursuit: So that, as far as in them lay, instead of assisting their gallant countrymen, who had merited every thing from their hands, these Gadites took part with the enemy, and did what they could to facilitate their escape, by denying some relief to their weary pursuers. By the right of war, Gideon might have demanded this help from any nation, but much more from a people who were embarked in the same cause, and whose refusal of so small a boon had the aggravation of perfidy and ingratitude, as well as hard-heartedness, to inflame its guilt.

Nor was this all. His brethren, the Gadites, not only refused him this common courtesy, but were very witty likewise in making their jests and sarcasms upon Gideon. They upbraided him with the smallness of his army, and magnified the strength of his enemies, and thereby, not only did all they could to discourage his men in their pursuit, but endeavoured likewise to have it believed, that there was no interposition of God in gaining this victory, and that Gideon would never be able to accomplish it: And so, to their other vile qualities they added insult and irreligion; a contempt of God, and a disparagement of the man "whom the Lord had made so strong for himself." And therefore it is not at all to be wondered at, that Gideon, under all this exasperation, should choose to bring the two captive kings (with whom they had upbraided him) in triumph to these two places, and then resent the affront, which was done to God as well as himself, by making a severe example of some of the chief offenders.

It is suggested indeed by some, that Gideon was as great an offender as any, in his making an ephod for the purpose of idolatry; but before we admit of so rash a censure, we should enquire a little into the nature of this ephod, and for what possible purpose it was at first made.

(b) An ephod, we know, is a common vestment belonging to priests in general; but that of the high-priest was of very great value. This vestment however was not so peculiar to the priests, but that sometimes we find the laity (as in the case of David bringing home the ark of God) allowed to wear it; and therefore some have imagined, that the ephod which Gideon made, was only a rich and costly robe of state, which, on certain occasions, he might wear to denote the station he held in the Jewish republic. But if his intent was only to distinguish himself from others by such a particular vestment, how this could give occasion to the people's falling into idolatry, or any way become a snare to Gideon and his house, we cannot conceive.

Others therefore suppose, that the word ephod is a short expression to denote the high-priest's breast-plate, together with the Urim and Thummim; and hence, by an easy figure, they are led to think, that to make an ephod is to establish a priesthood;

(a) *Patrick's* and *Le Clerc's* Commentaries.
Eastern countries.

† This was the manner of threshing their corn in the
(b) *Le Clerc's* and *Patrick's* Commentaries. *Pool's* Annotations, &c.

and thereupon conclude, that Gideon's crime, in making this ephod, was not to establish idolatry, but only to institute another priesthood, besides that which God had appointed in Aaron and his posterity : And to this purpose they suppose, that he erected a private tabernacle, an altar, a mercy-seat, with cherubims, &c. that being now made the supreme governor, he might consult God at his own house, in such difficult points as occurred in his administration.

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But besides that it is not easy to imagine, that a man familiar with God, and chosen by him, as Gideon was, should, after so signal a victory as he had obtained, immediately apostatize, as he must have done, had he set up an oracle in his own house ; there seems to have been no manner of necessity for it, because Shiloh (where the tabernacle stood) was in the tribe of Ephraim, which adjoined to that of Manasseh, whereunto Gideon belonged. (a) Nor should it be forgotten, that this ephod was (b) set up in Ophrah, which place Gideon (c) quitted as soon as he had resigned his public employ, and retiring to a country-house of his own, in all probability left this ephod behind him : There is reason therefore to believe, that the design of setting it up, was merely to be a monument of his remarkable victory over the Midianites, in like manner as other conquerors had done before him ; only, as the common custom was, to erect a pillar, or hang up trophies upon the like occasion, he chose rather to make an ephod or priest's habit, (perhaps all of solid gold) as a token that he ascribed this victory only to God, and triumphed in nothing so much, as in the reformation of the true religion by that means. This was an action of no bad intent in Gideon, though, in after-times, when the people began to return to idolatry, and had this fancy among others, that God would answer them at Ophrah, where this ephod was, as well as at his tabernacle in Shiloh, it was perverted to a bad purpose. But as this abuse arose from the mad caprice of the people, and not from any ill intent in Gideon, he is no more chargeable therewith, than Moses was with the idolatrous worship which the Israelites, in future ages, paid to the brazen-serpent, which he, for very beneficial purposes, at first set up.

It is generally supposed, (d) that the Sacred History has not furnished us with a complete catalogue of the several judges that governed Israel, from the death of Joshua to the reign of Saul ; and that even of those whom it takes notice of, it relates nothing but what was most remarkable in their lives and actions : And yet, notwithstanding this conciseness, it is far more exact and instructive than the history of Josephus, to which (e) Scaliger seems to give a preference above all others. The fault of Josephus (as any one may perceive it) is this :—That he omits the account of several miracles which the Holy Scripture relates, for fear that other nations, to whom he writes, should think he gives too much into the marvellous, though, at the same time, he makes no scruple of sacrificing the glory of God to his own private character.

For this reason it is, that (f) he says nothing of the angel's touching with the end of his rod the sacrifice which Gideon had prepared, and so causing fire to flame out of the rock and consume it ; nothing of the two signs which God was pleased to grant him for the confirmation of his and his confederates faith, exhibited in the fleece's being at one time wet, and at another dry ; nothing of his zeal in demolishing the altar and grove of Baal, for which he drew upon himself the indignation of all the abettors of idolatry ; and here, in the matter of Shamgar, he suppresses the circumstance of his slaying six hundred Philistines with an ox-goad, though this be the only remarkable action recorded of him, and what may not improbably be thus accounted for.

In not many ages after this, we read, that these very Philistines, with whom he had here to do, had disarmed the Israelites to that degree, that (g) none in their whole army, when they came to action, had either sword or spear, but only Saul and Jona-

(a) *Patrick's Commentary*.
Heglon tué par Ehud.
(g) 1 Sam. xiii. 20, &c.

(b) *Judg. viii. 27.*

(c) *Ver. 29.*
(e) *Proleg. de Emend. Temp.*

(d) *Ver. 29.*

(f) *Saurin's Dissert. sur*
Antiq. lib. v. c. 8.

A. M. 2561, than his son; nay, that they would not so much as suffer a smith to live among them, &c. or 4189. Ant. Chris. 1448, &c. or 1292. for fear of their providing themselves with military weapons, but obliged them to repair to them, whenever they wanted to sharpen or repair their instruments of husbandry.

Now it must be allowed, that the Scriptures say nothing of any such reduction as this in the days of Shamgar: But if such was the policy of the Philistines in the beginning of Saul's reign, why may we not suppose that it commenced some time sooner? This certainly the Scripture tells us expressly, that (a) "in the days of Shamgar, the highways were unoccupied, and the inhabitants of villages ceased," by reason of the Philistines, who came and plundered the country, and carried off what booty they pleased without molestation; and therefore it is not unlikely, that, for want of some regular arms, (whereof the Philistines had stripped the Israelites) Shamgar might make himself a goad so well contrived, that with it he could kill any man, without any manner of suspicion that it was made for that purpose, but only for common use;* that with this instrument he usually went to plow; and when at any time the Philistines made their inroads into his lands, he, with the assistance of his servants, (who perhaps were armed in the like manner) fell upon them, and, at several times, killed to the number of six hundred of them in the space of about twenty years. This is a fair analysis of the sense of the words; and where is the great incongruity of this? Or what indeed is there in the whole, that an ordinary master of a family, with his domestics about him, might not do, even though we should not call in any supernatural strength to his assistance?

There is more reason, however, why we should have recourse to the supernatural aid of God, in Samson's slaying a thousand of these Philistines at one heat as it were, with no other weapon than the jaw-bone of an ass. (b) For though asses in Syria (as the learned affirm) are both stronger and larger than what we have with us, and their bones consequently better fitted for such hard service as this; yet it must be owned, that it was by the wonderful strength that God infused into him, and not any aptitude of the instrument he made use of, that he was enabled to do all this execution, which is only incredible to those (c) that do not consider the power of God, who can raise our natural strength to what degree he pleases, and at the same time enfeeble the spirits of those who oppose his designs in such a manner, that they shall have no power to help themselves.

It must be owned, however, that there are some circumstances in this transaction which might possibly intimidate the Philistines, and thereby contribute to facilitate the slaughter which Samson made among them. The people of Judah had now prevailed with him to suffer himself to be bound, and conducted to the Philistines camp: The Philistines, as soon as they saw him coming, ran out with joy to receive him, and very likely forgot to take their arms with them, as knowing for certainty, that he was safe enough now, and bound, as we say, to his good behaviour. But when, contrary to their expectation, they saw him first break the cords so easily and suddenly, and then coming upon them with such fury and vengeance, (d) it is not unlikely, that this might put them in no small confusion, and as they straggled about in their flight, give him the opportunity of slaying them one by one as he came up with them.

[There is likewise reason to believe, that the ass, if not a sacred animal itself among the Philistines, was an animal which they offered in sacrifice to their god, and on which

(a) Judg. v. 6, 7.

* [The goads for common use at this day in Syria are very fit for such a purpose. They are about eight feet long, and, at the bigger end about six inches in circumference. At that end they are armed with a small spade, or paddle of iron, for cleaning the plough from

the clay that encumbers it in working; and at the other or smaller end, with a sharp prickler for driving the oxen.] Burder's Oriental Customs, No. 79.

(b) Pool's Annotations. (c) Patrick's Comment. (d) Patrick's Commentary.

they were accustomed to feast themselves. Pallas assures us that, among the *Kirgians*, the roasted flesh of the wild ass is deemed one of the greatest dainties; and we know from Pliny, (a) that the flesh of the young onager was in great request among the Roman epicures. We have already seen that the ass was deemed sacred at Pethor where Balam officiated as high priest; and nothing is better known than that among the idolaters of high antiquity, the animal, which was itself the emblem of a divinity in one country, or even in one province of a country, was offered in sacrifice in another at no great distance. The ass, which was a god or the emblem of a god at Pethor, may have been sacrificed to Dagon by the Philistines at *Lehi*; and from the circumstance of the jaw-bone being fresh and moist, with which Samson routed the Philistines, Mr Bryant infers, (b) and I think with great reason, that an ass had been just sacrificed by that people, who had been regaling themselves on its flesh, in gratitude to their god for delivering into their hands their most formidable enemy bound, and rendered incapable of defending himself, by his own countrymen. But if such was the case, the miraculous exploit of Samson was a conspicuous manifestation of the superiority of Jehovah over the gods of the Philistines; and when that people saw him not only burst the bands with which he had been bound by his own countrymen, but also convert the jaw-bone of that very animal which they had just offered in sacrifice to their tutelary gods, into an instrument of their destruction, it was natural for them to be confounded, and rendered utterly incapable of defending themselves.]

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This, we must allow, is the highest instance of personal prowess that we any where read of; and yet profane historians inform us of other men, who, by their mere natural courage, unassisted by any Divine power (as the Scripture informs us Samson was), have made great havock among their enemies: For Flavius Vopiscus reports, that in the Sarmatic war, Aurelian slew forty-eight men in one day, and in several days * 950, which diminishes the wonder of this achievement of Samson's not a little; especially considering, that the Philistines, in their surprise, might think that this was all a trick and management of his conductors to get so many unarmed men into their power, and that they too were ready to fall upon them, and assist him, in case they should make any opposition against their champion.

That Samson, after so long a fatigue, should be almost ready to *² die with thirst, is no strange thing at all; but the question is, how, in a place where no water was, he came to have his thirst allayed? The Hebrew word *Mactes* does properly signify the *socket*, in which the great teeth in the jaw are fastened; and from hence Bochart, among many others, endeavours to maintain by arguments, that God made one of these teeth drop out of the jaw, wherewith Samson had done all this execution, and immediately a stream of water gushed out from thence: But with all due deference to the learning of so great a man, (c) it is somewhat strange, that he should not observe (when he had

(a) Lib. viii. c. 44.

(b) *Observ. on some passages in Sacred Scripture.*
part ii.

* Upon this occasion the boys made a song, (not much unlike that which Samson made of himself, Judg. xv. 16.) which, after a military manner, they shouted in their dances. "Mille, mille, mille, mille, mille, mille, decollavimus unus homo; Mille, mille, mille, mille, decollavimus; Mille, mille, mille: Vivat, qui mille, mille occidit: tantum vini habet nemo, quantum effudit sanguinis. Vid. *Patrick's Comment.*

*² Josephus gives us a strange account of the reason of Samson's thirst, and what there is no manner of foundation for in the Scripture. "Samson (says he) was so transported with the thoughts of this victory, that he had the vanity to assume the honour of

the action to himself, without ascribing the glory of it to God's Power and Providence, as he ought to have done: But while this arrogant and overweening humour was yet upon him, he found himself seized with a violent parching thirst, which gave him to understand, that, after all his successes, he was but flesh and blood still, and liable to human infirmities. The sense of this disorder brought him to the knowledge of himself, and to a penitent confession, that the victory was God's, and that he was able to do nothing of himself without the Divine assistance. He begged pardon for his past vanity and presumption. His prayers were not in vain; for immediately there gushed out of a rock, that was hard by, a stream of delicious water to relieve him in his raging drought." *Antiq. lib. v. c. 1.* (c) *Le Clerc's Comment,*

A. M. 2561,
&c. or 4189.
Ant. Chris
1443, &c.
or 1222.

this passage under consideration), that such a miracle as this would be inconsistent with the words which follow, (a) "wherefore he called the name thereof," i. e. of the fountain of water which gushed out, "*En-hakkor, or the well of him that cried to God, which is in Lehi even unto this day.*" Lehi is here therefore the proper name of a place. That place had doubtless its appellation from this adventure of Samson's with the jaw-bone, and from this place God caused a spring to arise, that he might allay his hero's thirst. For it is incongruous to think, that the jaw of an ass, or any other creature, could have subsisted to the time when the author of this book of Judges lived; or (if all this while none should have had the curiosity to take away this wonderful bone) that God should, out of the socket of one of its teeth, cause a stream of water to flow, by one continual, useless miracle.

It must then be a mistake in our version, to render the words, "God clave an hollow place, which was in the jaw," when (according to the * sense of the ancients upon this place) they should be translated, which was in Lehi. For the truth of the matter is, that though this jaw be long extinct and gone, yet those who have travelled through this part of Palestine, do inform us, that in the suburbs of Eleutheropolis, where Lehi very likely stood, the fountain which arose upon this occasion, is still remaining, and called *the fountain of the jaw*, to this day.

But be that as it will, whether the water which refreshed Samson in this his distress came from the jaw-bone, or (as others think) from a cliff in a rock, or an hollow in the earth, the miracle is the same, though it may not be improper (whenever we can by an easier interpretation) to take away occasion from those that seek occasion to disparage the oracles of God.

We are not however concerned to vindicate Samson in all his extravagant and outrageous actions; such as his marrying an idolatress, and then leaving her; his loving lewd women, and discovering the great secret, whereon his all depended, to a common prostitute; his killing some and maiming others, who perhaps had never done him any personal injury; and setting the whole country on fire to burn their corn-fields and vineyards, with many other things that might be alleged against him. All that we have to say is, that God raised him up to be a scourge to the Philistines, and that, had there not been some peculiarities in his temper, he had not been so proper an instrument in his hand; or that had he not run himself so often into difficulties, he would not have had so frequent occasion to employ the strength which God had given him in extricating himself from thence by the death and destruction of his enemies. Though therefore there was no fatality in making him of this unruly disposition, (for that he contracted himself) yet there was a wise direction of God's Providence in making his rugged temper subservient to his purposes, and even out of his faults and enormities extracting the plagues and punishment of his foes; for (b) "surely the wrath of man shall praise thee, (says the Psalmist) and the remainder of his wrath shalt thou restrain." This we may lay down as a general reason for God's making use of so furious an instrument as Samson was, in the execution of his will: And now let us examine a little into the other inconsistencies, which some pretend to espy in the sequel of this story.

(a) Judg. xv. 19.

* To this purpose we may observe, that the Seventy Interpreters, the Chaldee Paraphrast, and Josephus in his history, make it to be a proper name of a place whence the waters gushed out. The words in the Septuagint are, *Καὶ ἐρύξεν ὁ Θεὸς τὸν ἐν Σιαγόνι, καὶ ἐξῆλθεν ἐξ αὐτοῦ ὕδωρ*, "God clave an hollow place" in the ground, which was afterwards called *lehi*, or *siagon*, and out of it issued water. Josephus is quoted before, only he had these words farther, *ὅθεν ὁ Σαμψώνης*

ἐκάλει τὸ χωρίον, Σιαγόνα, "which rock, (says our translator of Josephus) from the exploit of Samson, bears the name of a jaw unto this very day." And the words of the Paraphrast are directly to the same purpose: So that it is much to be wondered at how so learned and acute a man as Bochart should overlook these sentiments of the ancients. *Le Clerc's Commentary.*

(b) Psal. lxxvi. 10.

A certain anonymous author, † in a dissertation upon Samson's foxes, has solved the whole difficulty of that piece of history, if we will but admit of his suppositions. He supposes, that the word *Schualim*, which we render *foxes*, should, with a little variation, be written *Schoalim*, which denotes *sheaves*, or rather *shocks of corn*; and that the word *Zanab*, which in our translation is a *tail*, equally signifies the *extreme* or *outermost part* of any thing. Thus, in an orchard planted in the form of a *quincunx*, the farthest tree is called *Zanab*; and in like manner, the extreme or outside shocks in a field may be so called here; and then the sense of the words will be,—“That Samson, at different places, set fire to three hundred shocks of corn, which stood in the out-parts of the fields, belonging to the Philistines, and so, by the fire's spreading from shock to shock, destroyed, in a manner, all their crop.”

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But without entertaining any novel interpretation, and which upon examination perhaps will hardly bear the test, we may adventure to say, that these three hundred foxes which Samson is said to have caught, are not, even in a literal sense, so incredible a thing, nor so liable to ridicule as some may imagine. For we are to consider, (as the learned (a) Bochart, from the account of several travellers, evinces) that the whole country, especially that part of it which belonged to the tribe of Gad, so abounded with foxes, that from them (b) several places took their names: that under the name of foxes may not improperly be comprehended a creature, very much like them, called *thöus*, which go in such herds, that two hundred of them have been seen together at once; that the manner of catching them was not (as we may imagine) by hunting only, but by snares and nets, as the above mentioned author plainly demonstrates; and that Samson did not do this alone by himself, in a day and night's time, but that, being assisted by his servants and neighbours, (as he was a man of considerable eminence in his country) he might possibly be some weeks in accomplishing his design.

[“There is indeed reason to think, that there was nothing new or uncommon in this operation, as it was the most obvious for the end proposed that the wit of men could devise. We accordingly find, that Ovid alludes to the practice, and mentions, that foxes and fire-brands were every year exhibited at Rome, and killed in the circus. It is alluded to proverbially, more than once, by Lycophron, and seems to have been well known in Greece. He makes Cassandra represent Ulysses as a man both of cunning and mischief; and styles him *λαμπουρος*, a fox with a fire-brand at his tail; because wherever he went, mischief followed. In another place, he speaks of a woman equally artful and mischievous, and calls her—*βασσαρα λαμπουρις*, a *she-fox with the like fire behind* (c).”]

To catch foxes in great numbers, and to employ them, with fire-brands at their tails, as instruments of destruction, appears therefore to have been an exploit by no means peculiar to Samson. It was an exploit indeed far from being incredible or even romantic, if we consider what collections have been made of creatures much wilder and rarer than foxes; that (d) Lucius Sylla, when he was prætor, ordered to be shewn on the amphitheatre an hundred lions; Julius Cæsar, when he was dictator, four hundred; and that (e) the emperor Probus, at one spectacle, exhibited a thousand ostriches, a thousand stags, an hundred Lybian, and a hundred Syrian leopards, and an infinite number of other strange creatures: and why then should it be thought to be a thing so incredible, as to need the intervention of a miracle (as some contend) for Samson, with

† Mr Bernard, in his *Repub. des Lettres*, Oct. 1707, p. 407. makes mention of a small treatise in 12mo, entitled, *Dissertation sur l'Annee de Balaam, les Renards de Samson, la Machoire d'âne*, &c. from whom I have extracted the author's sentiment, as Mr Bernard has represented it, but could by no means meet with the book itself, and cannot therefore properly enter into an examination of the author's opi-

nion: however, I thought convenient to make mention of it, because there seems to be something ingenious as well as singular in it.

(a) *Hieros.* i. 3. c. 10

(b) *Judg.* i. 35.

(c) *Bryant's Observations.*

(d) *Pliny*, lib. viii. c. 16.

(e) *Apud Vopis. in Probo.*

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&c. or 4189.
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the assistance of his friends, who might be let into his design, to get together, in some time, three hundred foxes, in a country that every where abounded with them?

Foxes (we are none of us ignorant) are very apt to do a great deal of mischief wherever they abound, and (a) therefore Samson might have this farther aim in collecting so many, viz. that thereby he might clear his own country of such noxious animals, and, at the same time, that he very well knew, no creature could be more convenient for his purpose of annoying and detrimmenting his enemies. For, as these creatures are very swift of foot, and have a natural dread of fire, they could not well fail (when once they were turned into it) of setting the standing corn in a blaze, and then, as they were tied in couples, tail to tail, this would make them draw one against the other, and so being retarded in their flight, and staying longer in a place, they would give the fire more time to spread itself, and make a conflagration universal.

Upon the whole, therefore, we may conclude, that the mustering up such a number of foxes, in order to burn up the Philistines corn, was neither a foolish nor impracticable thing, supposing Samson was at liberty to prosecute his revenge in this manner. But for his righteousness in this, and many of his other proceedings, we are (as we said before) no ways accountable, unless his being considered as a chief among the Israelites (whom God had raised up to annoy the Philistines, and in such methods as this, rather than open war, to weaken them by his personal valour and strength) may be admitted in justification of what he did. But to proceed.

(b) Whether Samson's hair was the physical, or only moral cause of his strength, needs not, I think, be made any question. For though plenty of hair may be some indication of bodily strength, yet since he that is naturally strong, becomes not less so by having his hair cut off, (though this was certainly the case of Samson) it must necessarily follow, that his hair was no natural cause of his strength, which was a supernatural and miraculous gift, not (c) perhaps always inherent in him, but only dispensed at certain times, when the "Spirit of God came upon him." (d) It depended indeed on the covenant made between God and him, the sign of which covenant was his hair; and therefore when, in compliance to his harlot, he suffered his hair to be cut off, he broke the covenant with God, and, forfeiting the spirit of strength and courage, was left to his own natural weakness, and so became an easy prey to his enemies. But having been now a considerable time in prison, wherein he was cruelly used, he began to repent (no doubt) of his folly; and therefore making fervent supplications to God for pardon of the violation of his Nazaritism, he renewed his vow, and so being restored to the condition he was in, before he lost the favour of God, his strength began to grow, and increase in proportion as his hair did*.

When his hair was thus grown, and his strength returned, it is made a question, whether the house (as it is called in Scripture) which he pulled down, was the temple of Dagon, for whose honour this festival was appointed, or some other edifice?

That it was not a common house, is evident from the multitude of the people which it contained; and though the temples of the Philistines are supposed (e) by some to have been of the same figure and make with those in Egypt, i. e. a kind of a rotunda, flat-roofed, with a large portico without, and pillars within to sustain the building; yet this seems to be no more than a fiction, devoid of all authority, and accommodated to the purpose of solving this difficulty. It is not certain that the temples of the Philistines were built in this manner, and much more probable it is, that this house of their

(a) *Calmet's Commentary* in *Judg.* xxv.

(b) *Calmet's Dictionary* under the word *Samson*.

(c) *Patrick's Commentary*.

(d) *Collier's Introduction*.

* [It is worthy of observation, that Samson, among all his sins, appears not to have been ever guilty of

idolatry. His failings were those which naturally result from youth, and health, and great bodily strength; and therefore they did not render him more unworthy perhaps than king David of being employed to annoy the enemies of his country.]

(e) *Calmet's Commentary*.

famous god Dagon was made of stone; and though it wanted no proper supports, yet it is scarce supposable, that in a structure of this kind, its whole weight should be supported by two pillars only, and these so very contiguous, that Samson could lay hold on them both at one time.

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The most general opinion, therefore, is, that this was a structure which the Philistines made use of (upon such occasions as this), built all of wood, and supported by wooden pillars, in the form of the theatres which, in after-times, were in great request among the Romans. Towards the middle of this building, we may suppose that there were two large beams upon which the weight of the whole structure lay; and that these beams were supported by two pillars, which stood in a manner contiguous to each other. So that, as soon as Samson had moved and unsettled these, down must the principals, and with them the whole building come. The only remaining difficulty is, how a building, made of wood, and supported by two pillars only, should be able to contain such a multitude of men and women? But whoever reads * Pliny's Natural History, will therein find a description of two theatres, built by Curio, capable of containing a much greater number of people than the Philistines are here said to be, and yet (what was a wonder much greater than the two pillars here) whenever they were turned round (as they frequently were) to meet and make one amphitheatre, they both rested upon one hinge only, which, had it happened to slip, must have occasioned (as our author tells us) a much greater slaughter than what was at the battle of Cannæ; as, by the actual fall of an amphitheatre, built by Atilius, no fewer than fifty thousand persons (as * Tacitus relates the story) were killed, wounded, and maimed; which is enough, one would think, to silence the cavils of those who are apt to fancy, that a building of such a capacity could not be so contrived as to rely only on two supporters.

And indeed all the other exceptions which are usually made to Samson's character and conduct, are, in effect, no more than mere cavils, which arise, in a great measure, from an unacquaintedness with the idiom of the Hebrew tongue. For as, when in Jotham's parable, wine is said (a) "to cheer both God and man;" the words *elohim* and *anashim*, may signify as well *high* and *low*, *princes* and *peasants*, i. e. all conditions of men do find themselves cheered and refreshed with wine; so, when it is said, that (b) "the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon Samson," we are not to understand thereby, that he had any grace extraordinary, or sanctifying influences of the blessed Spirit communicated to him, but only, that he was endued with wonderful courage and fortitude, an undaunted mind, and a supernatural strength of the body at such and such times, which enabled him to do great acts, but made no alteration in his manners. And,

* The words of Pliny, upon this occasion, are so very remarkable, that I thought it not improper to quote them. "Theatra duo juxta fecit amplissima è ligno, cardinum singulorum versatili suspensa libramento; in quibus utrisque, antemeridiano ludorum spectaculo edito, inter sese aversis, ne invicem obstreperent scenæ, et repenti circumactis, ut contra starent; postremo jam die, descendentibus tabulis, et cornibus inter se coeuntibus, faciebat amphitheatrum, et gladiatorum spectacula edebat, ipsum magis auctorum populum Romanum circumferens. Quid enim miretur quisque in hoc primum? Inventorem, an inventum? Artificem, an auctorem? Ausum aliquem hoc excogitare, an suscipere? Parere, an jubere? Super omnia erat populi furor, sedere ausi tum infidâ instabilique sede—perituri momento aliquo, laxatis machinis. Lib. xxxvi. c. 15.

* The fall of this amphitheatre Tacitus relates in these words; "M. Licinio, L. Calpurnio Coss. ingen-

tium bellorum cladem æquavit malum improvisum; ejus initium simul et finis exstitit. Nam, cœpto apud fidenum amphitheatro, Atilius, quidam libertini generis, quo spectaculum gladiatorum celebraret; neque fundamenta per solidum subdidit, neque firmis nexibus ligneam compagem superstruxit; ut qui non abundantia pecuniæ, nec municipali ambitione, sed in sordidâ mercede id negotium quæsivisset. Adfluxere avidi talium, imperitante Tiberio, procul voluptatibus habiti, virilis et muliebris sexus omnis ætas, ob propinquitatem loci effusius, unde gravior pestis fuit, confertâ mole, dein convulsâ, dum ruit intus, aut in exteriora effunditur, immensamque vim mortalium, spectaculo intentos, aut qui circum adstant, in præceps trahit, atque operit.—Quinquaginta hominum millia eo casu debilitata, vel obruta sunt." *Annal.* lib. iv. c. 62.

(a) Jud. ix. 13.

(b) Ibid. xiv. 6.

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in like manner, when he is said to (a) have "judged Israel twenty years," we need not infer, that he was the supreme magistrate in the republic (for that very probably was Eli), but only, that he was the chief man of war, whose valour was renowned, and who did many great and signal exploits, in order to rescue his countrymen from the oppression of their enemies, and to restore them to their former liberty.—I say, in order to this, for he did not perfect their deliverance; only, by the several defeats which he gave them, and the great damages he did them, he infused into the Israelites such a spirit and resolution, that, not many years after, they took up arms, and, appearing in the field against them, defeated and subdued them; so that, in all the days of Samuel, we hear of no farther molestation from that quarter.

The Scripture, however, furnishes us with a reason why idolatry was not abolished, and a thorough reformation of religion established, during this period; for it tells us, that (b) in those days, viz between the death of Joshua and the first institution of the Judges, there was no king, i. e. no chief ruler or magistrate (for the regal authority did not as yet begin) in Israel, "but every one did that which was right in his own eyes;" so that, considering the natural propensity of the people to idolatry, and the want of a supreme power lodged in some one's hand to control them, we need not wonder that, before the institution of judges, they fell into the like practices with the nations among whom they lived.

The judges indeed were invested with authority to suppress these practices; but then we are to consider, that few or none of them had a jurisdiction over the whole land of Israel, but were only rulers of some particular cantons which they undertook to deliver from imminent danger; and therefore, how zealous soever they might be for a reformation, yet since their authority was not of sufficient extension, the wonder is not great, that (c) idolatry should still be practised in some dark corners of the land, and that in the tribe of Dan (which was so far distant) "there should be set up Micah's graven images, which he made, all the time that the ark of the Lord was at Shiloh."

Shiloh indeed was so far distant from several parts of the land of Canaan, that people began to account it too much trouble to go up thither to pay their vows and oblations, and therefore bethought themselves of setting up private chapels, wherein (as they supposed) they might serve God as well; and, in the institution of these, being left to their own fancies, they generally intermixed some idolatrous practices, and, partly in imitation of the cherubims at Shiloh, and the teraphims among their heathen neighbours, chose to worship God through some visible representation, which, by one means or other, was carried on in time to direct idolatry.

The Moabites, we know, even when the Israelites were in a state of independency, and had reason sufficient to have a jealous eye over them, by their arts and contrivances drew them into the worship of their god Baal-peor; and much more might the nations, to whom they were now in subjection, succeed in their attempts, either of recommending, or (if need required it) of forcing their religion upon them: So that it was not to be wondered at, if things ran into such disorder, when there was (if not a total dissolution) at least a grievous relaxation of government; when some of the governors themselves were far from being the best of men; and, through inclination, entreaty, or compulsion, the people were so liable, upon many occasions, to relapse into idolatry.

What Micah's intention might be in setting up a teraphim, and other kind of images in his house, commentators are not so well agreed. Those that are willing to apologize for the thing, are ready to say, (d) that, as he lived in a time of great trouble and confusion, wherein the public worship of God was much neglected, if not totally disused, his design was to erect a kind of domestic tabernacle, wherein he might serve God in private, since he could not, without much difficulty, do it in public; and that the sacred

(a) *Judg.* xvi. 31.

(b) *Ibid.* xvii. 6.

(c) *Ibid.* xviii. 3.

(d) *Calmet's Commentary.*

habiliments he made, his ephod, his teraphim, &c. were no more than what he had seen at Shiloh. But since the laws of God condemn (a) the making images of any kind as objects of adoration; the setting up of any religious worship, different from what he had established; the offering of sacrifices, or (b) performing any public service any where but in the tabernacle; and the employing of any priests in his worship but such as were of the race of Aaron; it is certain that Micah was guilty of a violation of all these prohibitions, and, in the matter of these graven and molten images, cannot be excused from the crime of idolatry.

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And indeed, unless he intended to patronise that, what reason could he have to make any innovations in religion, since (according as we date this action) either Phineas or Eli were then in the high priest's office at Shiloh, where the public worship was preserved in all its formality, and from whence Micah, who lived in the mountains of Ephraim, was not so very distant, but that he might have gone thither upon all solemn occasions?

The Spirit of God therefore, in repeating the admonition, that "in those days there was no king in Israel, &c." before it begins to relate this story of Micah, seems to insinuate, that this was a wicked and enormous practice of his; that the worship he instituted was idolatrous, and the priest he had procured to officiate a renegade: And if so, the answer this priest received in behalf of the Danites, and wherein he promised them the success they met with, must have proceeded from no good principle, unless we suppose (what seems indeed most reasonable) that the Levite promised them success, (because he was minded to please them) merely out of his own head, though, to give it a better sanction, he might pretend to receive it from this fictitious oracle. In this case, there was no occasion of having recourse to any oracle whatever; because any man of a moderate foresight, considering the undaunted courage and valour of the Danites, and the supine negligence and cowardice of the people of Laish (if once they came to action), might, without the Spirit of prophecy, foretel the event.

The directions which God gave Moses concerning Joshua's consulting the Divine oracle, are conceived in these words:—(c) "He shall stand before Eleazer the priest, who shall ask counsel for him, after the judgment of Urim, before the Lord; at his word shall they go out, and at his word shall they come in, both he and all the children of Israel with him, even all the congregation." In all the book of Joshua indeed we do not find, that he had this constant recourse to the oracle; (d) and from hence some Jewish doctors conclude, that he was bound to do this only at the first entrance upon his office, to demonstrate to the people that he was Moses's successor; but that afterwards the Spirit of prophecy rested upon him, so that he knew how to conduct all public affairs without having occasion for this oracular advice. Moses we know made no use of the Urim and Thummin, to consult God by the mediation of the high priest; he went immediately and directly to God himself: But we do not read that Joshua was admitted to such familiarity, nor had he such frequent revelations from God as his predecessor had. And therefore, as God was pleased, in supply of that defect, to remit him to this method of consulting him, we cannot but think, that upon every momentous occasion, especially in the weighty affairs of war, he was always careful to pursue it: And therefore the words in the beginning of Judges, "Now, after the death of Joshua, the children of Israel asked of the Lord, saying, who shall go up for us against the Canaanites?" do not import, that they never consulted God by way of Urim and Thummim, during the life of Joshua, but rather that, after the death of so great a commander, they were at a stand what to do, nor would they adventure to proceed in the

(a) Exod. xx. 4. and xxxiv. 17. Deut. iv. 15, 16.

(b) Lev. xvii. 8. and Deut. xii. 14.

(c) Numb. xxvii. 21.

(d) Vid. *Patrick's Commentary* in locum.

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war of Canaan, without following the same directions which were given to Joshua, and which he had so long pursued with so good success.

Nay, the consulting of the Divine oracle, especially in matters of war, was accounted so very necessary, in order to obtain success, that some commentators have esteemed this the only reason why the Israelites, in so just a cause as punishing the Benjamites, for their unheard-of wickednesses, were, in two several battles, defeated; even because they did not previously apply to God, as they should have done. (a) "They sent up indeed to the house of the Lord, and asked counsel of him, and said, which of us shall go up first to the battle against the children of Benjamin?" i. e. which of their tribes should have the honour or hazard of making the first attack: (b) But it is observable, that they had come to a full resolution of making war against the Benjamites, and to that purpose, had made draughts of the men that were to be employed in it, without ever consulting God, whether an enterprise of this nature, wherein there was likely to be such an effusion of the blood of their brethren, would be pleasing to him or no. (c) The truth is, they never questioned his approbation of what they accounted so laudable: They presumed upon his protection and assistance; and the vast superiority of their forces made them confident of success. But now, in a matter of such moment as this, to overlook the Divine oracle, and be determined by their own counsels only, and to march against one of their own tribes, with a full purpose of destroying them utterly, before they knew any thing whether God had decreed their destruction or no, was not only an instance of their rashness and presumption, but an act likewise of rebellion against the Majesty of God, who was the King of Israel, and, upon that account alone, had right to declare whether they were to wage war against their brethren the Benjamites or no.

But supposing that the grounds of the war were justifiable, and God consenting to it, yet why might not he take the opportunity of punishing the Israelites, by means of the Benjamites, for their tame permission of crimes more enormous than what they had now taken into their heads to chastise; (d) for suffering spiritual adultery among them, even while they were so hot upon punishing carnal?

The laws which God gave the Israelites against the sin of idolatry, were so very severe, that whoever did but so much as entice another to the commission of it, was to lose all title to pity and compassion, though he was never so dear a friend, never so near a relation: (e) "Thine eye shall not pity him, neither shalt thou spare, neither shalt thou conceal him, but thou shalt surely kill him; thy hand shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterwards the hands of all the people." But now, in the case of Micah, and the whole tribe of Dan, who had notoriously fallen into idolatry, the rulers of Israel were so far from putting this law in execution, that they connived at their apostacy: And therefore God took occasion, from this quarrel between the other tribes and that of Benjamin, to make use of the latter as scourges to punish this base connivance of the former; and after he had twice employed them to this purpose, he inverted the fate of the war, and in so doing, made the confederate army of Israel the instruments of that terrible vengeance which he took upon the Benjamites, in the punishment of their execrable lewdness. For this is the wonderful wisdom of God's Providence, to employ the passions of men to his purposes, and to make one wicked set of people the instruments of his punishing another, even as he expresses himself in another case, that in some measure is not incongruous to this:—(f) "Woe unto the Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, and the staff in their hand, is mine indignation.—Against the people of my wrath will I give him charge to take the spoil, and to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire in the streets.—Howbeit he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart

(a) Judg. xx. 18. (b) *Calmet's Commentary* sur Juges, c. xx. (c) *Saurin's Diss.* vol. iv. Dissert. 18.
(d) *Patrick's Commentary* on Judg. xx. (e) Deut. xiii. 8, 9. (f) Isaiah x. 5, &c.

think so; but it is in his heart to destroy, and to cut off nations not a few.—Wherefore it shall come to pass, that when the Lord hath performed his whole work upon Mount Sion, and on Jerusalem, I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks;” and in like manner here, when by the hand of the Benjamites, he had chastised the rest of the Israelites, by the hand of the Israelites he punished the Benjamites for their gross impieties, making use of their respective passions, and furious resentments, to accomplish his will; albeit “they meant it not so, neither did their heart think so; but it was only in their hearts to destroy and cut off one another.”

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When the heat of their fury however was abated, and the Israelites began to look back with a little coolness upon what they had done; how they had almost totally destroyed one tribe of their brethren, and bound themselves by an oath never to marry their daughters to any of the poor remains of it, (which could not but prove the extirpation of the whole) the joy and triumph of their late victory was turned into mourning and bitter lamentation.

Whether this oath, against contracting any affinity with the Benjamites, was in itself lawful and obligatory or no, (a) some interpreters, without any manner of reason, as I think, have disputed. For whatever was attended with such pernicious consequences, as to oblige their brethren, either to live unmarried, which would prove the extinction of their tribe, or to marry the daughters of heathens, which was contrary to their divine law, or to take to themselves wives wherever they could find them by force and violence, which was contrary to the universal law of nations: Whatever, I say, was attended with such evil consequences as these, could not be lawful in itself, nor of any obligation to the consciences of those that made it; and therefore it is somewhat wonderful, how the Israelites, when they found themselves involved in such difficulties (as (b) they themselves testify), that, for the preservation of this their oath, they were forced to have recourse to acts of the utmost cruelty and violence, did not perceive the illegality of it, and themselves, consequently, absolved from its observation.

It is not the intent of the sacred historian to relate matters otherwise than they happened; nor is it any part of our business to apologize for actions that in themselves are abominable, and will admit of no excuse. The massacre of the people of Jabesh-gilead, without ever sending to know the reason of their absenting themselves from the war, was a cruel expedient to extricate the Israelites from a difficulty, in which their superstitious observance of an unlawful oath had involved them; and a sad instance it is of the iniquity and barbarity of those times: For how severe soever the laws of military discipline may be, or with (c) what justice soever recusants, as well as deserters in war, may be deemed guilty, and the Jabeshites be called public enemies, because they did not obey the order of the whole congregation, and by refusing to join with them against the Benjamites, made themselves partakers of their crimes; yet, certainly, to slay the innocent with the guilty, and to put women and children to death, who were never made to bear arms, was the very height of injustice and barbarity. If it be said, that the cherem, or the sentence of utter execration was passed upon them, I do not see with what justice the virgins could be spared, (as we find they were by a public decree) unless we suppose that God, from the tabernacle at Shiloh, (before which the Israelites were now assembled) signified his intentions of dispensing with the full execution of the sentence by reason of the public necessity.

And indeed the public necessity is the only good reason that can be given for that other act of violence, the rape of the virgins at Shiloh. For whatever may be said in vindication of the Benjamites, viz. that what they put in execution was by order and advice of their superiors, and that their intent in doing it was just and honest, and de-

(a) Vide *Calmet's Commentary*.

(b) *Judg. xxi. 6, &c.*

(c) *Calmet's and Patrick's Commentaries*.

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&c. or 4189.
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void of that brutal lust which is incident to common ravishers ; whatever may be said in excuse of these, the elders of Israel, who gave them this counsel and authority, had certainly no right to dispose of other people's children without their parents consent and approbation

* The rape of the Sabine virgins is usually produced as a piece of history parallel to this ; (d) but Romulus, in whose reign it happened, was one of those princes who accounted every point that contributed to the establishment of his dominion, not only lawful, but glorious, and that every thing ceased to be a crime, when once it became necessary for reasons of state : But the rulers of Israel either had, or should have had, different notions. They were governed by God, " whose throne is established in righteousness," and should therefore, one would think, have contrived some other means of re-establishing a diminished tribe, than those violent ways of rapes and forced marriages. But the sacred historian has assigned a reason for these unrighteous proceedings, when (in (a) four different places in the book of Judges) he tells us, that " in those days there was no king in Israel ;" and (b) for want of such a supreme authority, every tribe, and every city, nay, which is more, every private man committed many horrid things, which were not publicly allowed. This (c) was the cause of Micah's idolatry, as we noted before ; of the Benjamites filthiness and abominable lusts ; and of all the enormous things done by the main body of the Israelites ; their killing all the Benjamites without distinction ; their binding themselves by rash and unlawful oaths ; their killing all the women of Jabesh-gilead who were not virgins ; and here, their permitting, nay, their ordering this rape for the preservation of a rash and unjustifiable oath : And this should teach us to be very thankful for the authority that is set over us, in order to preserve us from the commissions of such like enormities ; for which end, the custom was, among the ancient Persians, (as our learned Usher observes) to let the people loose to do even what they listed, for five days after their king died ; that, by the disorders which were then committed, they might see the necessity of having a king to govern them, and, when one was settled in the throne, the great reason of being obedient to him.

Thus we have endeavoured to clear up most of the passages in the book of Judges, which seem to imply any inconsistency or incredibility during this period : And if any heathen testimonies may be thought a farther confirmation of their truth, we may say, that the seeming incongruity of Shamgar's slaying so many Philistines with an ox-goad is mightily abated, by what is told of Lycurgus, viz. that he overthrew the forces of

* This piece of history we find thus related : " Romulus, perceiving that his new city was surrounded by several very powerful and warlike nations, who bore them no good-will, formed a design to make them his friends by contracting marriages with them. But considering with himself, that these neighbouring nations would hardly enter into that affinity with a people, as yet famous neither for their riches, nor great exploits, without being in some measure compelled into it ; he was resolved to put in practice the stratagem of his uncle Numitor, and to enter into this alliance with them by carrying off their daughters. This design he communicated to the senate ; and, having obtained their approbation of it, he proclaimed a public feast to be celebrated in honour of Neptune, and invited all the neighbouring cities to the many diversions and spectacles which he then intended to exhibit. Crowds of people, with their wives and children, flocked to the feast ; but on the last day, when it began to draw to a conclusion, Romulus ordered all the young men, that upon a signal given, they should seize and carry off every one a virgin, keep them all

night, without offering any rudeness to them, and bring them, the next morning, before him. The young men took care to execute his orders : For dispersing themselves into small companies, as soon as they saw the sign, they seized on the damsels, who, upon this occasion, made a hideous outcry, as expecting much worse usage than they met with. The next day, when they were brought before Romulus, he spoke very courteously to them, and told them, That it was to do them no dishonour, but merely to procure them husbands, that he ordered that rape, which was an ancient custom derived from the Greeks, and the most noble and gallant manner of contracting marriage. He therefore entreated them to be well affected towards those husbands which fortune had given them ; and so, distributing the young women, which were six hundred and eighty-three, among an equal number of unmarried men, he dismissed them."

Dionys. Halicarn. Antiq. lib. ii. c. 21.

(a) *Saurin's Dissert. xviii. vol. iv.*

(b) Chap. xvii. 6. xviii. 1. xix. 1. and xxi. 25.

(c) *Patrick's Commentary.*

(d) *Ibid.*

Bacchus with the self same weapon ; that from Deborah's being a prophetess, a governess, and dwelling upon a mount, the story of the Thebean sphinx (as some learned men imagine) was invented by the Greeks ; that their Hercules was certainly the Samson of Sacred Writ, his Omphale and Dalilah the same, and that his pillars at Cales were of near affinity with those of Gaza ; * that his fatal locks gave rise to the fable of Nisus king of Megara, upon whose hair the fortune of his kingdom depended ; that his foxes were commemorated at Rome, every return of their harvest, *² by a similar ceremony of tying them tail to tail, and so letting them go ; and (to name no more) that Jephthah's sacrificing his daughter to God is partly adumbrated by Agamemnon's offering his Iphigenia to Diana, and partly by Idomeneus's promising to make a victim to Neptune of the first thing he should meet on shore, if he escaped the present storm), which happened to be his own son. So happily do many fictions of the poets concur to confirm the truth and authority of Holy Writ.

From Judges
i. to the end
of Ruth.

DISSERTATION II.

JEPHTHAH'S RASH VOW.

THIS vow of Jephthah's, which has employed the thoughts and pens of so many learned men, is conceived in these words :—" And Jephthah vowed a vow unto the Lord, and said, If thou shalt without fail deliver the children of Ammon into my hands,

* The story is thus told by Ovid. Nisus was besieged by Minos in his capital city Megara. The fate of that city, which was the strength of his kingdom, depended upon a certain lock of red hair, which was concealed under the rest. The siege had now been continued for six months, when the daughter of Nisus, who had frequent opportunities of beholding her father's enemy Minos from a tower that looked into his camp, was so taken with his goodly mien and deportment, that she fell desperately in love with him. Her love, and the occasion of it, the poet has thus related :

—Hac judice Minos,
Seu caput abdiderat cristatâ casside pennis,
In galea formosus erat ; seu sumpserat auro
Fulgentem clypeum, clypeum sumpsisse decebat, &c.
Cum verò faciem dempto nudaverat ære,
Purpureusque albi stratis insignia pictis
Terga premebat equi, spumantiaque ora regebat ;
Vix sua, vix sanæ virgo Niseia compos
Mentis erat : Felix jaculum, quod tangeret ille,
Quæque manu premeret, felicia fræna vocabat.

Metamor. lib. viii.

The result of this passion was, that this perfidious daughter stole into the chamber, while her father was fast asleep, cut off the lock whereon the fate of his kingdom depended, and carried it to Minos, as an undoubted pledge of her love. But if this fable and Samson's history have a near resemblance in some of

their first circumstances, they are very different in the conclusion ; for Minos rejected the present with scorn, and slighted the woman because of her perfidy ; whereas the princes of the Philistines took the advantage against Samson, which Dalilah's treachery gave them. *Saurin, vol. iv. Dissert. 17.*

*² There was anciently a feast in Rome, called *Vulpinalia*, or the *feast of the foxes*, which Ovid makes mention of. For, enquiring into the custom of tying lighted torches to their tails,

Cur igitur missæ vinctis ardentia tædis
Terga ferant vulpes, causa docenda mihi,
he resolves the matter, by telling us, that a certain youth having caught a fox, which had destroyed much poultry, was going to burn it. His words are these :
Captivam stipulâ fœnoque involvit, et ignes
Admovet ; urentes effugit illa manus.
Quâ fugit, incendit vestitos messibus agros,
Damnosa vires ignibus aura dabat.
Factum abiit ; monumenta manent : nam vivere
captam
Nunc quoque lex vulpem Carseolana vetat.
Utque luat pœnas gens hæc, cerealibus ardet,
Quoque modo segetes predidit, ipsa perit.

Fastorum, lib. iv.

But Bochart has confuted this notion of Ovid's concerning the origin of this custom, and endeavours to refer it to this piece of history in Samson's life. *Saurin, vol. iv. Dissert. 17.*

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1222.

then it shall be, that whosoever cometh forth out of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace from the children of Ammon, shall surely be the Lord's, and I will offer it up for a burnt-offering." And the result of this vow was,—“That Jephthah passed over unto the children of Ammon to fight against them, and the Lord delivered them into his hands; whereupon he came to Mizpeh unto his house, and behold his daughter came out to meet him with timbrels and dances, and she was his only child, besides her he had neither son nor daughter. And it came to pass when he saw her, that he rent his clothes, and said, Alas! thou hast brought me very low, and thou art one of them that trouble me; for I have opened my mouth to the Lord, and I cannot go back. And she said unto him, My father, if thou hast opened thy mouth unto the Lord, do to me according to that which proceeded out of thy mouth, forasmuch as the Lord has taken vengeance for thee of thine enemies, even of the children of Ammon: Only let me alone two months, that I may go up and down upon the mountains and bewail my virginity, I and my fellows. And he said go; and he sent her away for two months, and she went with her companions, and bewailed her virginity upon the mountains. And it came to pass at the end of two months that she returned to her father, who did with her according to his vow which he had vowed, and she knew no man: And it was a custom in Israel that the daughters of Israel went yearly to lament the daughter of Jephthah four days in a year.” I set the whole passage before the reader that he may the better judge of the depending controversy; for a great controversy there is among commentators, whether this daughter of Jephthah's was really sacrificed or no: And for his farther satisfaction in this point, I will fairly state the arguments on both sides; consider a little on which side they preponderate; and then enquire, in case he did sacrifice his daughter, or (as others will have it) devote her only to God's service in a single life, whether the thing was lawful for him to do, and what might possibly be the motive of his doing it.

Those (a) who maintain the negative, or more merciful side of the question, argue in this manner:—That Jephthah was certainly a very good man, because we find him ranked among the worthies of old that are commemorated with honour by the author of the Hebrews: That he was an Israelite, and as such lived under the law, which prohibited human sacrifices by the severest penalties: That had the vow been intended in this sense, God would never have vouchsafed Jephthah so signal a victory as he did, which must have terminated in the violation of his own laws; and therefore they conclude, that so kind and tender a father as Jephthah is represented, would never have sacrificed an innocent, dutiful, and obedient child, as her whole carriage seems to denote her, in discharge of a rash and inconsiderate vow; especially when, according to the prescription of the law, he might have redeemed his daughter at a price so inconsiderable (b) “as ten shekels of silver.”

It must be something else, therefore, say they, that Jephthah did unto his daughter, and that (according to the import of the text) was to devote her to a state of celibacy, or that she might live in the manner of a religious nun all the days of her life: For the particle *vah*, which we render AND (“it shall surely be the Lord's, AND I will offer it up”), is a disjunctive in this place (as it is elsewhere), and signifies OR; so that the true version of the passage should be, “whatever cometh forth to meet me shall surely be the Lord's, OR I will offer it up for a burnt-offering,” i. e. if it be an human creature I will dedicate it to the service of God; if a beast, of any kind proper for sacrifice, I will instantly offer it up: For that in this sense the vow is to be understood, is evident from her going into the mountains “to bewail her virginity,” which, had she been doomed to be sacrificed, had not been near so proper as to bewail her untimely end. Nor can we

(a) *Patrick's* and *Le Clerc's* Commentaries. *Jenkin's* Reasonableness, vol. ii. c. 18. *Selden*, de Jure Nat. et Gent. lib. iv. c. 11. *Howell's* History, &c.

(b) Lev. xxvii. 5.

think that Jephthah would have ever suffered her to have made a circuit of two months among her companions for fear of making her escape, or procuring some of her friends and acquaintance, either to rescue her or intercede for her, had she been destined to suffer death upon her return. From Judges
i. to the end
of Ruth.

On the contrary, when she returned to her father, and “he had done to her according to his vow,” it immediately follows, that “she knew not man;” which shows that the purpose of his vow was answered by obliging her to a state of perpetual virginity in some retired place, where she was secluded from all society, except that the daughters of Israel (those especially of her acquaintance) went up, either to talk and converse with her, or to celebrate her praise, or to comfort her concerning her solitary condition (for to all these senses may the word *letannoth* be applied) four days in the year, i. e. one day every quarter.

Upon the whole, therefore, they infer, that Jephthah’s daughter did not fall a sacrifice, but was consecrated to God and his service, i. e. devoted to a single life, and to remain a recluse all her days: which could not but occasion Jephthah no small grief and trouble, because by this means his family became extinct, and himself destitute of issue to inherit his estate and perpetuate his name.

These are some of the most plausible arguments that are generally employed to prove, not the sacrifice of Jephthah’s daughter, but only her obligation to a perpetual virginity in the worship and service of God.

Those (a) that maintain the affirmative, or harsher side of the question, viz. that Jephthah, in pursuance to his vow, did actually sacrifice his daughter, form their arguments in this manner:—(b) “That the times wherein Jephthah lived were so sadly addicted to idolatry, that (c) “to burn their sons and daughters in the fire to their gods” was a common practice among the Israelites as well as other nations; and that the manner (d) in which he lived (before he was called to the assistance of his country), which was chiefly by plunder and rapine and bloodshed, might make him not incapable of vowing to sacrifice the first of his domestics that should meet him upon his victorious return: That this vow is delivered in general and indefinite terms, viz. that “whatsoever should come forth of the doors of his house to meet him, that should surely be the Lord’s;” and it should be the Lord’s, “by being offered up for a burnt-offering:” That though the particle *vah* be sometimes used in a disjunctive sense, yet it can only be so where things are really distinct and different from each other, but cannot be admitted where the one manifestly includes the other, as it is in the passage before us; that therefore it is much more congruous to all the rules of good sense to understand the words of Jephthah so, as that, by promising “whatsoever he met should be the Lord’s,” he obliged himself in general to consecrate it to God, and that, by promising farther, that “he would offer it up for a burnt-offering,” he specified the manner in which he intended to make his consecration.

Vows of perpetual virginity, say they, are institutions of a modern date: The word of God knows nothing of them; nor has this pretended celibacy of Jephthah’s daughter any manner of foundation in Scripture; and therefore, when this circumstance is inserted, that “she knew no man,” it is not to signify that she lived a perpetual virgin, but only, that she was so unhappy as to leave the world in her youth, and before she had the knowledge of a man.

Had Jephthah meant no more, say they, by performing his vow, than consecrating his daughter as a perpetual virgin to the service of God, what cause was there for rending his clothes, and bemoaning himself, as we find he did? Had Jephthah made only a vow of celibacy for his daughter, whereby she was bound to nothing more painful

(a) *Edwards’s Enquiry into some remarkable Texts.*
Dissert. 15.

(b) Deut. xii. 31.

(c) *Saurin*, vol. iii.

(d) *Grotius in locum, Calmet’s Dissert. sur le Vœu de Japhet, and Saurin, de eodem, &c.*

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than to lead a single life, what reason was there for bewailing this as a grievous calamity, which some men account a thing so eminently glorious and honourable? Is the being shut up as a recluse, and entered into the list of perpetual virgins, a matter of such bitter complaint and lamentation? Was this so sore an evil, an affliction so extraordinary, that, not only before she underwent it, she and her companions should, for two months together, be allowed to bewail it; but that, after she had undergone it, the daughters of Israel should be required to lament it four times a year? (a) If she was actually put to death in execution of her father's vow, it is easy then to understand, why the particular circumstance of her dying without issue (when "she was the only daughter of her father," and had no other prospect of posterity to keep up his family) should be represented as a sore aggravation of her violent and untimely death. But it seems very difficult to account for that bitter lamentation made by her father, by herself, by her companions, and by all the daughters of Israel in succeeding times, if she suffered no other, no severer punishment, than that of being devoted to a single life.

These are some of the most prevailing arguments on the affirmative side; and, for the confirmation of them, it is farther alleged, that both Josephus and the Chaldee paraphrast testify the same thing; that the ancient doctors, both of the Jewish and Christian church, were of the same opinion; and that, as to the substance of the fact, the compilers of the homilies of our church do perfectly agree with these ancient writers: So that, how desirous soever we may be to clear Jephthah from the imputation of so cruel, so impious, so unnatural an act, as that of murdering his own daughter; yet, if we will adhere to the more easy and obvious construction of the words, and as they appear to us at first view; or if we retain any just esteem and veneration for the sense of antiquity, we must necessarily conclude, that, when it is said of him, that "he did with his daughter according to the vow which he had vowed," the meaning can be no less, than that he did really put her to death. But whether he acted well or ill in so doing, is another enquiry we are now to pursue.

The law of *Cherem* (as the Hebrews call it), which is a law of a peculiar nature, is delivered in these words: (b) "No devoted thing, which a man shall devote to the Lord of all that he hath, both of man and beast, and of the field of his possession, shall be sold or redeemed; every devoted thing is most holy to the Lord. None devoted, which shall be devoted by men, shall be redeemed, but shall surely be put to death." Of this sort a very learned (c) commentator supposes this vow of Jephthah's to have been, and that therefore he could not redeem his daughter, but was necessitated to put her to death. It is to be observed, however, that (d) *Cherem* (which is the term here made use of) signifies either persons devoted to slaughter for their execrable impieties (as were the Amalekites, and other nations whom God commanded the Israelites to extirpate), or things destined to destruction (as were Jericho and Ai) for the wickedness of those to whom they appertained: So that the law of *Cherem* related only to such persons or things, as, by an irrevocable vow, were destined to utter destruction for their horrid crimes, and because indeed there was a particular command from God, both for the making or putting such a vow in execution. But it can by no means be pretended, either that Jephthah's daughter merited such a punishment, or that her father had any order or commission from God to inflict it. On the contrary, all human sacrifices are expressly forbidden as odious and detestable to God: (e) "Thou shalt not do so to the Lord thy God; thou shalt not burn thy sons and thy daughters in the fire," as the heathens used to do to their gods; "for every abomination to the Lord, which he hateth, have they done."

There is one law indeed which seems to be of some moment in the case before us, and

(a) Bishop Smalridge's Sermons.
de Voto Jephthæ.

(b) Levit. xxvii. 28, 29.
(d) Edwards's Enquiry into several Texts.

(c) Lud. Cappel. Diatr.
(e) Deut. xii. 31.

that is this :—(a) “ If a man vow a vow unto the Lord, or swear an oath to bind his soul with a bond, he shall not break his word, he shall do according to all that proceedeth out of his mouth.” But then all sober casuists are agreed, that a vow has only a constructive, not a destructive force, i. e. that it can only lay a new obligation where there is none, or where there is one, strengthen it; but that it cannot cancel a former obligation, or superinduce one that is repugnant to it. Now all our obligations to obedience proceed from God. (b) He has an uncontrollable right to give laws to his creatures: but if men, by entering into vows, could free themselves from the obligation of his laws, they might then, whenever they pleased, by their own act, defeat his authority. Whatever therefore is in itself forbidden by God, and for that reason unlawful; whatever is against any precept of natural or revealed religion; whatever is inconsistent with those relative duties which men owe to one another; whatever, in short, is in any respect sinful, cannot, by being made the matter of a vow, become justifiable. So that he who hath vowed to do what cannot be done without sin, is so far from being obliged to perform his vow, that he is, notwithstanding his vow, obliged not to perform it; because there is not only great obliquity in making such an unlawful vow, but this obliquity is so far from being lessened, that it is aggravated by keeping it.

(c) Since therefore the thing vowed by Jephthah seems to have been in itself unlawful; since his daughter was innocent, and had done nothing to deserve death; since the running out to meet her father, with joy and congratulation, was an act of piety which seemed to entitle her to his love and favour; since the natural affection of a father towards his child must be stifled, before he could give way to the execution of the sentence of death upon her; since the sacrificing of children to their gods was a crime, for which the heathen nations were justly detested, and punished by God; since Jephthah's offering his daughter as a victim to the Lord might reflect a dishonour upon the true God, as if he also delighted in such sacrifices; since these, I say, and several other things, might be urged in aggravation of this action, we may safely and confidently aver, (d) with the Jewish historian, “ that the sacrifice which Jephthah offered, was neither lawful nor acceptable to God,” but, on the contrary, a very impious act, and an abominable crime, though it might possibly proceed from a mistaken principle of religion.

The religious observation of oaths and vows has, at all times, been esteemed a duty incumbent on those that made them; insomuch that, even when they have been procured by guile, they have not been thought destitute of their obligation. The Gibeonites certainly imposed upon the children of Israel, when they obtained from them a league of amity and friendship; and yet we may observe what notions the Israelites had of this kind of obligation, when, in their public consultations, they say, (e) “ We have sworn unto them by the Lord God of Israel; now therefore we may not touch them.” This was a remarkable instance before Jephthah's days, and it is not improbable that he might have it in his remembrance, and imprudently make use of it, as a precedent of the irreversibleness of oaths, and of the inviolable tie he was under by reason of his vow: but, in succeeding times, there is a passage in Scripture, which comes nearer to the case now before us. Saul, in the day of battle, perceiving his enemies to give ground, out of the abundance of his zeal made a vow to God, that whoever should taste any food before the pursuit was over, should certainly die; and, upon this occasion, his own son Jonathan had like to have been made a sacrifice, merely because the father would have been thought religious and austere in the observation of his oath; notwithstanding he was plainly excused from the obligation of it as to his son, who was both in another place, and ignorant of his father's will, and under a necessity of taking some small refreshment when he was so faint and hungry. What wonder then if Jephthah, who, we have reason to believe, was a person much more religiously inclined than Saul,

From Judges
i. to the end
of Ruth.

(a) Numb. xxx. 2. (b) Bishop Smalbridge's Sermons.
(d) Josephus's Antiq. lib. v. c. 9. (e) Josh. ix. 19.

(c) Ibid.

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or 1222.

should think himself under an obligation to observe his vow, even though it was to the destruction of his own and only daughter?

What the acceptableness of Abraham's offering his son Isaac was, he had read in the book of Moses; and this might possibly lessen the horror of the fact he was going to commit. For though Abraham had the positive command of God for what he did, which Jephthah could not pretend to, so that there was a great disparity between their two cases; yet it was plain, from the acceptableness of Abraham's offering, and the great reward bestowed on him for his intended oblation, that the sacrificing a beloved child was not, in all cases, and under all circumstances, sinful, but might be so circumstantiated as to be an act of piety, and approved in the sight of God: and, when this example proved such an action, (as to the matter and substance of it) not only lawful but commendable, Jephthah might from hence be led into an opinion, that the difference between his case and that of Abraham, was not so great as that what was laudable and almost meritorious in the one, should be imputed as an unpardonable crime to the other*.

He had read likewise in the law, that (a) "when thou shalt vow a vow unto the Lord, thou shalt not be slack to pay it;" and was sensible, that a wilful neglect of this was an heinous crime, (b) a mocking of God, a dissembling with heaven, and an act of injustice and unfaithfulness towards him, who is a severe exactor of vows. and is wont to avenge the breach of them by the infliction of the sorest punishments; and upon these premises he might possibly argue with himself in this manner: "Though I know that the performance of my vow will be accompanied with murder, yet I consider likewise, that my not performing it will be attended with downright perjury. Seeing then there is a necessity of sinning one way or other, I am resolved to chuse the former; for though that be an injury to my daughter, yet the other is an affront to God. My child is dear to me indeed, but my God, my Father, is much more so. It is better therefore to be cruel than impious; to be guilty of bloodshed, than to be perjured and false to the Lord of heaven and earth. 'I have opened my mouth unto the Lord, and I cannot go back.' I must not reverse, I dare not revoke the sacred promise which I have made to the Almighty; but my firm and unshaken purpose is to perform it." Thus the mistaken sense of the indissoluble obligation which his vow had laid upon him, blinded his eyes, and ran him upon this fatal rock.

He could not but know (had he considered at all), that no vow is obligatory where the matter of it is unlawful; or that, what is unlawful in itself, cannot possibly be made otherwise by the interposition of a vow. Nay, he could not but know, that to act unlawfully, in virtue of a vow, was a double sin, since not only the vow itself was sinful, but the act, consequent thereupon, was sinful likewise; and yet so blind sometimes is the zeal of an erroneous conscience, that it will not suffer men to perceive, at least to be governed by the most rational and self-evident principles.

Upon the whole, therefore, we may conclude, that how great soever this sin of Jephthah's was, yet (properly speaking) it was the sin of ignorance, and the effect of a misguided conscience. By the bitter complaint, which he uttered upon the first sight of his daughter coming out to meet him, it is evident that he was under great trouble and perplexity; and as she had done nothing to alienate his affections from her, but in this very act of meeting him had done something to engage his affections more strongly towards her, the bowels of a father must necessarily yearn to save the life of a loving and beloved child. The generous offer which she made him, that he might do to her whatever he pleased, according to his vow, though it made the doing of it less unjust,

* [If Jephthah reasoned in this manner, he was a weaker man than his general conduct indicates him to have been; for no religious man of a sound judgement could be led to infer from the command given to Abraham and afterwards revoked, that he had a

right to sacrifice his own child. See the Answer to the Objection, stated in Chap. i. Book iii. Vol. i.]

(a) Deut. xxiii. 21.

(b) Edwards's Enquiry into several Texts.

could not but add a fresh sting to his grief, and if he had any generosity in his breast, make him do it with more reluctance. No one, who is a parent; no one who has felt the workings of nature towards his own issue; no one who hath suffered, or who hath feared the loss of an only child, but must be sensible of what pangs of sorrow, what melt-ings of compassion, what agonies of grief, must pierce the soul of Jephthah, when he imagined himself under the sad necessity of sacrificing his own, his only, his virgin-daughter, whom he could not offer up for a burnt-offering, without sacrificing, at the same time, all the propensions of nature, all the ease and pleasure of his life, all the prospect of keeping up his family. Nothing less than a mistaken opinion of the indis-pensable obligation of his vow could prevail with him, thus to over-rule the strong mo-tives of interest and inclination; and a mistake which took its rise from so good a prin-ciple, must, without question, at least extenuate the guilt, in the judgment both of good-natured men and of an all-merciful God.

From Judges
i. to the end
of Ruth.

We cannot however part with this remarkable piece of history, without making one inference, viz. that we should be strictly careful how we engage ourselves in any rash and indeliberate vows; because, as a vow is confessedly an act of religion, when once “we have opened our mouths unto the Lord,” we cannot, without manifest prevarica-tion and contempt of God’s authority, go back. And therefore, (to conclude in the words of a great (a) divine already quoted upon this subject) “as in civil life, men of the best character for integrity, and such as are most punctual in keeping their words, are observed to be very sparing in making promises; so in religion, the best way we can take to observe the precept given us by Solomon, (b) ‘that when we vow a vow unto God, we should not defer to pay it,’ will be in the first place to observe another precept, which he lays down before this, viz. that (c) ‘we should not be rash with our mouths, nor let our hearts be hasty to utter any thing before God.’”

[Whether Jephthah actually offered up his daughter for a burnt offering to God, or on-ly consecrated her to the service of the temple in a state of perpetual virginity, is the question at issue in the preceding dissertation. Our author seems to have been deci-dedly of the harsher opinion; though I imagine that no person would hesitate about adopting the milder, if it could be proved that vows of celibacy were not a modern in-vention. Our author, in stating the arguments for the more merciful opinion, candidly admits that the conjunction *vau* (1) rendered, in our version of Jephthah’s vow, *and*, might be rendered *or*, and this is completely confirmed by Dr Hales, who observes that it is warranted by the Levitical law about vows.

“The נדר *neder* or *vow* (says he) generally included either *persons, beasts, or things*, dedicated to the Lord for pious uses; which, if it was a simple vow, was redeemable at certain prices. Lev. xxvii. 1—8. But if the vow was accompanied with הרהם, *hherem* or *cherem*, ‘devotement,’ it was irredeemable, as in the following case, (Lev. xxvii. 28) ‘Notwithstanding, no *devotement* which a man shall devote unto the Lord, either of *man* or of *beast*, or of *land* of his own property, shall be sold or redeemed. Every thing de-voted is most holy unto the Lord.’ Here the three *vau*s, in the original, must be ren-dered disjunctively *or* (as the last actually is in our public version), because there are three distinct subjects of devotement to be applied to distinct uses: the *man* to be de-dicated to the service of the Lord, as Samuel was by his mother *Hannah* (1 Sam. i. 11.); the *cattle*, if clean, such as *oxen, sheep, goats, turtle-doves, or pigeons*, to be sacrificed; and if unclean, as *camels, horses, asses*, to be employed for carrying burdens in the service of the tabernacle or temple; and the lands to be sacred property.

“This law, therefore, expressly applied, in its first branch, to Jephthah’s case, who had *devoted* his daughter to the Lord; or ‘*opened his mouth* (as he declared) *unto the*

(a) *Smalridge’s Sermons.*

(b) *Eccles. v. 4.*

(c) *Ibid. ver. 2.*

A. M. 2561,
&c. or 4189.
Ant. Chris.
1443, &c.
or 1222.

Lord, and therefore could not go back." That virgins were then dedicated by the Israelites to the service of the tabernacle, is evident from the division that was made of the spoils taken in the first Midianitish war; for of the whole number of captive virgins we are told (Numb. xxxi. 35—40) that the Lord's tribute was thirty-two persons. Nor was it among the Hebrews only that young women were at a very early period devoted, on a principle of religion, to perpetual virginity; for we know that the order of vestal virgins was established among the ancestors of the Roman people before the birth of Romulus the founder of Rome. The common opinion, therefore, that vows of celibacy are but of yesterday is without foundation; and when we compare all this with what is said (Judges xi. 36—40.) of the disposal of Jephthah's daughter, there can, I think, be no room for doubt, but that she was, with her own consent, devoted to perpetual virginity in the service of the tabernacle, and by no means offered up as a burnt offering. "Her father's extreme grief on the occasion, and her requisition of a respite of two months to *bewail her virginity*, are both perfectly natural. Having no other issue, he could look forward only to the extinction of his name and family; and a state of celibacy, which is reproachful among women everywhere, was peculiarly so among the *Israelites*, and was therefore no ordinary sacrifice on *her* part, who, though she generously gave up the hope, could not but regret the loss, of becoming 'a *mother in Israel*;' and he did with her, we are told, according to his vow, which he had vowed, and she knew no man."

That Jephthah could not possibly have sacrificed his daughter according to the vulgar opinion, Dr Hales thus conclusively proves.

"1. The sacrifice of children was an abomination to the Lord, of which he repeatedly expresses his detestation; and it was prohibited by an express law (Lev. xx. 2, 3.) under pain of death, *as a defilement of God's sanctuary, and a profanation of his holy name*. 2. The case of Isaac before the law is irrelevant; for Isaac was not sacrificed, and it was only proposed to sacrifice him, for a trial of Abraham's faith, and other purposes, which have been elsewhere stated. 3. No father, merely by his own authority, could put an offending, much less an innocent, child to death, upon any account, without the sentence of the magistrates (Deut. xxi. 18—21.) and the consent of the people, as in *Jonathan's* case. 4. The *mischna*, or traditional law of the Jews, is pointedly against it, ver. 212.—'If a Jew should devote his *son* or *daughter*, his *man* or *maid* servant, who are *Hebrews*, the devotement would be void, because no man can devote *what is not his own, or of whose life he has not the absolute disposal*."

To these arguments no reply can be made, except that which is urged by Bishop Warburton—that Jephthah was a semi-pagan who knew little of the law, and had long been accustomed to disregard it. This, however, is said without the shadow of proof; and is indeed so directly contrary to all that we know of Jephthah's character and conduct, that the ingenious prelate is forced to confess, that after he was appointed judge or chief ruler of Israel, Jephthah appears to have acquired a competent knowledge of the law; but this concession completely destroys his lordship's argument. It was after he was judge of Israel, and had overthrown the Ammonites, that Jephthah devoted his daughter; and the bishop admits, that in his correspondence with the king of the children of Ammon, before the commencement of hostilities, he displayed the talents of an able and upright statesman, as he proved himself in war to be a brave and skilful general. Indeed he nowhere betrays any want of religious principle, or conducts himself in any respect so as not to be entitled to the commemoration that is made of him in the epistle to the Hebrews. His chastisement of the Ephraimites was indeed severe, but certainly not severer than they richly deserved; and if it were, it militates not in favour of the bishop's supposition, for it would be a proof that his sense of religion had become weaker after he had been for some time the chief magistrate of Israel.] See *Hales's Analysis*, &c. vol. ii. p. 318, &c.

CHAPTER III.

FROM THE BIRTH OF SAMUEL TO THE DEATH OF SAUL.

THE HISTORY.

DURING the time of Samson's great exploits, both the civil and ecclesiastical administration seems to have been in the hands of Eli the high priest, in the beginning of whose government Samuel was born. He was the son of Elkanah, a Levite, who dwelt in Ramah †, a city belonging to the tribe of Ephraim, and (as the custom of those times was) had two wives, whose names were Hannah and Peninnah. * Thrice every year he used to go to Shiloh, there to offer up his usual sacrifice, and, as he was a pious and religious man, he generally took his two wives with him, that they in like manner might make their oblations. Now Hannah, though she had no children, was his favourite wife, and therefore, at †² every feast upon the peace-offering, he usually sent her a separate mess, and of the choicest of the meat; which the other perceiving, was wont to †³ upbraid her with her sterility, or want of children. Hannah took this so sore to

From 1 Sam. i. to the end.

† *Ramah* signifies an *eminence* or *high situation*, and is therefore an appellation given to several places that are built in this manner. This is said to have stood upon Mount Ephraim, thereby to distinguish it from other towns, in different tribes, of the same denomination; and the reason why it is here called *Ramathaim*, in the dual number, is (as some imagine) because it was built upon two hills, which made it appear as a double city, and because it was situated on high, and had a watch-tower built in it, it therefore had the title of *Zophim* added to it. It stood upon the road that led from Samaria to Jerusalem; and for this reason, as well as its advantageous situation, Baasha, king of Israel, caused it to be fortified, that there might be no passage out of the land of Judah into that of Israel (1 Kings xv. 17. and 2. Chron. xvi. 1.); but in St Jerom's days it was no more than a small village. Here it was that Samuel passed a great part of his time; for his mother's dedication of him to the service of God did not confine him to Shiloh, after that God had called him out to a public employ, and appointed him his residence in a place more convenient for the execution of it. The truth is, after the captivity of the ark, and the death of Eli, all religious ceremonies seem to have ceased at Shiloh; for which reason it is said, that Samuel built an altar at Ramah, the place of his residence, to the intent that the peo-

ple might resort to him, either to receive judgment, or to offer sacrifices, which, though it was contrary to the law of Moses, seemed to be a case of necessity; because the ark being at one place, and the tabernacle at another, neither of them could properly be resorted to, either for sacrificing or any other part of public worship. *Patrick's, Le Clerc's, and Calmet's Commentaries, and Universal History.*

* The precept is exactly thus,—“Three times in the year all thy males shall appear before the Lord thy God,” (Exod. xxiii. 17.) which were at the feast of the passover, the pentecost, and that of the tabernacles; but women were exempted from this attendance, and therefore it was an extraordinary act of piety for Elkanah to take his two wives with him.

†¹ The blood of this peace-offering was shed at the foot of the altar, the fat was burnt, the breast and right shoulder was the priest's perquisite, and all the rest belonged to the person who brought the victim. With this he made a feast of charity, to which he called his friends and relations, and in several places of Scripture God reminds him to invite the Levite, the poor, the fatherless, and the widow. *Calmet's Commentary.*

†³ Sterility was looked upon among the Jews as one of the greatest misfortunes that could befall any woman; insomuch that, to have a child, though the

A. M. 2888, heart, that all the kind things which her husband said to her could not assuage or comfort her; but, as soon as she rose from table, away she hastens to the tabernacle, and there "pours out her soul before God," desiring of him to bless her with a son, which favour, if he would grant her, she promised to make him a Nazarite, and all the days of his life devote him to his service.

Her prayers were heard, and in a proper time she conceived, and brought forth a son, whom she called Samuel, even because she had asked him of the Lord, (for so his name imports) and after he was grown to a competent age, she brought him to Shiloh, and in a very joyful and thankful manner, presented him to Eli, who gladly received him, and immediately clothed him with a proper habit, even with a linen * ephod, that he might attend on the service of the tabernacle.

Eli himself was a very good man, but by much too indulgent to his children. He had two sons, Hophni and Phineas, who were mere libertines. They domineered over the men, and debauched the women at their devotions; and so far were they from being content with the portion which God had allotted them as priests, that they forced from the people (even before they had made their oblations) what part of the sacrifice they pleased; which gave so general a disgust, that religion grew into contempt, and the worship of God came to be disused.

Eli was not unacquainted with his sons ill conduct: but instead of chastizing them, as his authority required, he contented himself with reproving them now and then, but that, in such gentle and mild terms, as rather encouraged than deterred them from proceeding in their wicked practices; till at length God, being provoked with this his remissness, † sent a prophet to threaten him and his family with utter destruction; to upbraid him with his ingratitude, in slighting the sacerdotal honour which he had conferred on him; to foretel the death of his two sons both in one day, ‡ the removal of his priesthood into another and better family, and the extreme poverty which his posterity would fall into, upon their ejection from the sacerdotal office: Nor was it long before God discovered the same heavy judgments to Samuel, which was the first revelation he made to this young prophet, and which Eli (when he was told it) received with a mind fully resigned to the divine pleasure; (a) "it is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good."

mother immediately died thereupon, was accounted a less affliction than to have none at all. And to this purpose we may observe, that the midwife comforts Rachel in her labour, even though she knew her to lie at the point of death, in these terms, "Fear not, for thou shalt have this son also," Gen. xxxv. 17. *Saurin*, in vol. iv. dissert. 17.

* The ephod which the high priest wore (as we have described it elsewhere, vol. i. p. 561—62.) was a very rich habit indeed, Exod. xxviii. 6. but there were other kinds, of ephods, which not only priests and Levites, but even laymen upon some occasions wore, as we find in the instance of David, 2 Sam. vi. 14. which was not a sacred, but an honorary garment, (as we may call it) and such as the high priest might order Samuel to wear, to distinguish him from some other inferior officers belonging to the tabernacle. *Patrick's Commentary*.

† Who this prophet was, commentators are at a loss to know. Some imagine that it was Phineas, the son of Eleazar; but Phineas very probably was dead long before this time; and, if he had been alive, he and not Eli must have been high priest, unless Phineas had forfeited the office, and with it the Spirit of prophecy. Others therefore will needs have it to

have been Elkanah, Samuel's father; and some Samuel himself: But we no where read, that the father was endued with the Spirit of prophecy, and the son was certainly then too young, and unacquainted with the voice of God. The safest way therefore is to own our ignorance of what the sacred historian hath not thought proper to discover to us. *Calmet's Commentary*.

‡ The high priesthood was originally settled upon Eleazar, the son of Aaron, by a Divine decree; but that decree being conditional only, it is reasonable to presume, that there was some great offence or other in Eleazar's family, (though not recorded in Scripture) which provoked God to remove it into the family of Ithamar, who was Aaron's youngest son, and from whom Eli descended; and here, for the abominable practices of his sons, which he was too negligent to restrain, God threatens to translate the priesthood back again, from the family of Ithamar, to that of Eleazar, which accordingly happened in the reign of king Solomon, who deposed Abiathar, the last of Eli's line, from the pontificate, and set up Zadock in his stead. *Pool's Annotations*.

(a) 1 Sam. iii. 18.

In those days † there were but few prophets, and revelations were very scarce ; and therefore when the Israelites perceived, by the truth of his predictions, that God had appointed Samuel to the prophetic office, they were not a little rejoiced : and it was from the great expectations they had of God's favour in renewing this order of men among them, that they took up arms in order to rescue themselves from the Philistines yoke. The army of the Israelites encamped at a place which was afterwards called * Eben-ezer, and that of the Philistines at Aphek, a city of Judah ; but when they came to join battle, the Israelites were defeated with the loss of four thousand men.

From 1 Sam.
i. to the end.

The reason of this defeat was imputed by some to their want of the ark in the army, which, as the symbol of God's presence, would be a sure means of success ; and therefore they sent to Hophni and Phineas to bring it with them ; and when it arrived in the camp, received it with many a joyful acclamation. The Philistines at first were dispirited at the news, as much as their enemies were animated : But at length taking heart, and exhorting one another to act courageously, they repulsed the Israelites when they came to attack them ; and having slain thirty thousand of their foot (among whom were Hophni and Phineas), they routed the rest, and put them all to flight, so that the ark of the Lord fell into their hands.

This ill news, a soldier of the tribe of Benjamin, escaping from the field of battle, brought to Shiloh that very day, with the usual emblems of extreme sorrow, *² his clothes rent, and earth upon his head ; and then there was no small outcry and lamentation in the city. Eli, enquiring the cause of it, had the soldier brought before him ; who gave him an account, *⁵ that the Israelites were routed, his two sons slain, and

† Whatever revelations God might impart to some pious persons privately, there was at this time none publicly acknowledged for a prophet, unto whom the people might resort to know the mind of God ; nay, so little acquainted were these ages with the prophetic spirit, that we read of no more than two prophets, Judg. iv. 4. and vi. 8. in all the days of the Judges. *Patrick's Commentary.*

* This place is here mentioned prophetically ; for it had not this name till about twenty years after, 1 Sam. iv. 1. when Samuel fought with the Philistines, and gave them a total overthrow, and set up a monument of his victory (for the proper name signifies the stone of help) in the field of battle, which lay on the north border of Judah, not far from Mizpeh ; and Aphek, where the Philistines encamped, must not be far distant from it. *Wells's Geography of the Old Testament*, vol. iii.

*² If we consult Josh. vii. 6. Job ii. 12. and Ezek. xxvii. 30. we shall find, that this was the manner of mens expressing their deep sorrow for any great calamity that had befallen them. And, accordingly, we find Virgil representing Latinus rending his clothes, and throwing dust upon his grey hairs, when he laments his private and public calamities :

It scissa veste Latinus

Canitiem immundo perfusam pulvere turpans.

Æneid 12.

*³ Who this Benjamite was that brought the ill news to Shiloh of the loss of the battle, the history is silent, and the conjecture of some Jews, that it probably was Saul, is very uncertain and precarious. But there is something very remarkable in the account which he gives of the action. The words are these :

—“ And Eli said to the Benjamite, What is there done in the battle, my son ? And the messenger answered and said, Israel is fled before the Philistines, and there hath been also a great slaughter among the people, and thy two sons, Hophni and Phineas, are dead, and the ark of God is taken,” 1 Sam. iv. 16, 17. Madam Dacier highly commends the manner, wherein the sacred historian makes this messenger speak, and compares these words, “ Hophni and Phineas are dead, and the ark of the Lord is taken,” with those of Antilochus to Achilles, when he tells him the sad news,—

Κεῖται Πάτροκλος νεκρὸς δὲ δὴ ἀμφιμάχοντα
Γυμνὸν ἄταρ τὰ γε τύχῃ ἔχει κορυθαίολος Ἑκτωρ. *Il.* 18.

Whereupon she quotes the glossary which Eustathius has upon this passage in Homer. “ This speech of Antilochus (says that excellent critic) affords us a pattern, with what brevity such melancholy news should be related ; for in two verses it comprises every thing that happened, the death of Patroclus, the person who slew him, the encounter about his body, and his arms in the possession of his enemy. The Greek tragic poets have not been so wise as to imitate this ; and, of all others, Euripides, who upon the most doleful occasion is so apt to make long recitals, is most egregiously defective herein. Homer is the only author that deserves to be followed. Nothing is more ridiculous than to hear a messenger, when he is to report some very bad news, running into tedious circumstances and pathetic expressions. All he talks is not minded ; for he to whom he addresses himself cannot attend to what he says : the first word that acquaints him with the misfortune makes him deaf to every thing else. *Saurin*, vol. iv. dissert. 23.

A. M. 2688,
&c. or 4259.
Ant. Chris.
1116, &c.
or 1152.

the ark taken. Eli heard the defeat of the army, and the death of his sons, with courage and unconcern enough; but when he came to understand that the ark of the Lord was fallen into the enemy's hand, his spirits forsook him, and, being both heavy and aged, he fell from his seat, and broke his neck and died, after he had been the supreme magistrate in Israel * for the space of forty years. And (what was a farther family misfortune) his son Phineas had a wife, then big with child, and near her time, who, hearing of her father's and husband's death, and (what was the worst of all) of the captivity of the ark, fell in labour at the news, and being delivered of a son, had just strength to name him *Ichabod* (i. e. *no glory*), before she died; because the ark, which was the glory of Israel (as she assigns the reason), "was departed from them."

The Philistines, having thus got possession of the ark, *² carried it in triumph to one of their principal cities, named Ashdod, and there placed it in the temple of their god Dagon hard by his image. The next morning the people of *³ Ashdod, going into the temple, found Dagon fallen down upon his face before the ark; but, supposing this to be an accident, they set him up again; and again next morning found him not only fallen down, but his head and the palms of his hands broken off, and lying upon the threshold; whence there arose a superstitious use among the Philistines, that neither priest nor people would ever † tread upon a threshold.

* The Septuagint, and some ancient manuscripts, make the term of Eli's magistracy to be no more than twenty years; and, to reconcile this with the Hebrew text, some suppose, either that he had Samson joined in the government with him for the first twenty years of his administration, or his sons for the last; but there is no reason for the solution of a difficulty, which arises from nothing else but a fault in the text of the Septuagint. *Calmet's Commentary*.

*² It was a custom among the heathens to carry in triumph the images of the gods of such nations as they had vanquished. Isaiah prophecies of Cyrus, that in this manner he would treat the gods of Babylon:—"Bel boweth down, Nebo stoopeth; their idols were upon the beasts, and upon the cattle,—and themselves are gone into captivity," Isaiah xlv. 1, 2. Daniel foretels of Ptolemy Euergetes, that he would "carry captive into Egypt the gods of the Syrians, with their princes," Dan. xi. 8. And the like predictions are to be met with in Jeremiah xlviii. 7. and in Amos i. 15. We need less wonder, therefore, that we find Plutarch, in the life of Marcellus, telling us, that he took away, out of the temples of Syracuse, the most beautiful pictures and statues of their gods; and that afterwards it became a reproach to Marcellus, and raised the indignation of other nations against Rome, "That he carried along with him, not men only, but the very gods captive, and in triumph." *Saurin*, vol. iv. dissert. 24.

*³ The Philistines were descendants from Mizraim, the father of the Egyptians, and so, in all probability, having their first settlement in Egypt, or the parts adjoining, lay to the south-west of the land of Canaan. In process of time, however, they made inroads upon Canaan, and, in Abraham's days, had got possession of a good part of the territories which lay along the western coasts of the Mediterranean Sea. This tract of ground was divided into five principalities, or little kingdoms, viz. Gaza, Askelon, Ashdod, Gath, and Ekron; which, for the better understanding of some

particulars related of the ark during its stay in this country, it will not be improper to describe all together. The city of Gaza (from which the territory took its name) stood, as it were, on the very south-west angle or corner of the land of Canaan; but of this place we have spoken before. To the north of Gaza, lay next the city of Askelon, called by the Greeks *Ascalon*, and of great note among the Gentiles for a temple dedicated to Derceto, the mother of Semiramis, who was here worshipped in the form of a mermaid. To the north of Ascalon lay Ashdod, called by the Greeks *Azotus*, and famous for the temple of the god Dagon, whereof we have taken notice before. Still more to the north lay Gath, memorable for being the birth-place of the giant Goliath, whom David slew, and of several others of the same gigantic race. It was dismantled by Ozias, king of Judah, and finally laid waste by Hazael, king of Syria. However, it recovered itself, and retained its old name in the days of Eusebius and St Jerom, who place it about four miles from Eleutheropolis, in the way to Lydda. The most northern of these cities, still upon the coast of the Mediterranean Sea, was Ekron, called by the Greeks *Accaron*, a place of great wealth and power, and famous for the idolatrous worship of Beelzebub, who had here a celebrated temple and oracle. But of this idol we shall have occasion to say more when we come to the reign of Ahaziah, king of Judah, who sent in his illness to consult him. *Wells's Geography of the Old Testament*, vol. ii.

† It is somewhat strange, that when the Philistines saw their Dagon cast down before the ark of God with his head and hands broken off, they should not thence infer that he was no more than a vain idol; but instead of that, we find them honouring the very threshold whereby he received these maims, as if they had been consecrated, or some divinity infused into them, from the mere touch of this idol. This is a sore instance of blindness and infatuation; but it is no more than what other heathen nations fell into,

By this means the people of Ashdod could not but perceive that their Dagon was far inferior to the God of Israel, who, to make them still more sensible of this, smote them and the inhabitants of the places adjacent with emerods, and destroyed the fruits of their grounds with swarms of mice; so that (to redress their complaints) the princes of the Philistines ordered the ark to be removed to Gath, where the same judgments befel the people of that place; and when from thence it was carried to Ekron, not only the † plague of the emerods, but a wasting pestilence likewise went along with it; so that the people were resolved to send it away, and to that purpose called their priests together to advise with them in what manner they might best do it.

From 1 Sam.
i. to the end.

The priests advised them to provide a new cart, and to yoke to it two milch kine that had never drawn before, but to keep up their calves confined. In this cart they ordered them to place the ark, and (because it was proper to make some trespass-offering to the God of Israel) to have five * golden emerods, and as many golden mice (according to the number of the principal cities of the Philistines) made, and put in a coffer by the side of the ark. But, above all, they cautioned them to take notice which way the *² kine went; for, if they took towards Judea, they might conclude that these

For, whether the custom took its first rise from this practice of the Philistines or no, it is certain that among the Romans the threshold was consecrated to the goddess Vesta, and those which belonged to temples were always held in the highest veneration, as appears from Juvenal.—

—————Tarpetum limen adora. Sat. 6.
and that other passage in Tibullus,—

Non ego, si merui, dubitem procumbere templis,
Et dare sacratis oscula liminibus.

Lib. i. eleg. 5.

Nay, at this very day, there are some mosques in Persia whose thresholds are covered over with plates of silver, and which the people are not allowed to tread on; for that is a crime which cannot be expiated without undergoing very severe pains and penalties. *Calmet's Commentary.*

† The word *apholim*, which only occurs here and in the xxviiith chapter of Deuteronomy, is by different interpreters supposed to signify different things. Some take it for a *dysentery*, others for what they call *prociencia ani*; some for a *cancer*, and others for something *venereal* in that part. The Scripture tells us expressly that God “smote his enemies in the hinder parts,” Psal. lxxviii. 66. And therefore our translation is not amiss, which supposes their malady to have been such painful tumours in the fundament as very frequently turn into ulcers. *Patrick's and Calmet's Commentaries.*

* It was a prevailing opinion among the heathens, that the only way to appease their gods, when offended at them, was to offer them presents;—

Munera, crede mihi, capiunt hominesque deosque,
Placatur donis Jupiter ipse datis.

Ovid, de Arte, lib. iii.

And therefore no wonder that the Philistines priests hit upon this thought: And why they sent, along with the ark, the images of the parts which were afflicted with this sore disease, might proceed from a common custom likewise among the heathens of consecrating to their gods such monuments of their deli-

verance as represented the evils from whence they had escaped, or the members which had been disordered. Thus the people of Athens, having been afflicted with a shameful disease for not receiving the mysteries of Bacchus with a proper reverence, and consulting the oracle what they were to do in order to have it removed, were directed to make figures of the part affected, and present them to the god, which gave them this counsel: And accordingly the Philistines, hoping shortly to be delivered from the emerods and mice wherewith they were sorely infested, took the same method to get quit of them. Nor is the practice ceased among the Indians (as Tavernier relates in his Travels, page 92.) when any pilgrim goes to a pagod for the cure of any disease, for him to bring the figure of the member afflicted, either in gold, silver, or copper, according to his quality, and to offer it to the idol in a most submissive manner. *Calmet's and Patrick's Commentaries.*

* It was no bad policy in the Philistines to take milch kine, that had never been yoked before, to draw the cart, in order to know whether there was the hand of God in what had befallen them. As these creatures were unacquainted with the yoke, it would be a wonder if they should go jointly together, and not thwart or draw counter to each other; it would be a wonder if their natural affection would not incline them to return to their calves which were left behind; and it would be still a greater wonder, if, when there were so many different ways to take, they should go directly forward to Judea without any manner of deviation. It was therefore a matter of no small sagacity for them to make this experiment: To say nothing, that it was a received opinion among the heathens, that, in the motions of an heifer or cow that was never yoked, there was something ominous and declarative of the Divine will.

Bos tibi, Phœbus ait, solis occurret in arvis,
Nullum passa jugum, curvique immunis aratri;
Hac duce carpe vias. *Ovid. Metam. lib. iiii.*

A. M. 2888,
&c. or 4259.
Ant. Chris.
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judgments were of the God of Israel's infliction, if any other way, they might look upon them only as common accidents.

When all things were thus got ready, the kine were let go; and, taking the road which led to Bethshemesh in the way to Judea, they went lowing along until they came to the field of one Joshua, and there stood still by a great stone. Bethshemesh was one of the cities belonging to the Levites, and, therefore, when word was brought them of the arrival of the ark, they went and took it down and the coffer with it; and, cleaving the wood of the cart for a fire, sacrificed the two kine for a burnt-offering to the Lord. But, whether out of joy or curiosity, so it was that some of the Bethshemites, adventuring to look into the ark (which was expressly against the Divine command) were immediately slain to the number of seventy; which so terrified the rest, that they sent to the people of Kirjath-jearim, acquainting them that the Philistines had brought back the ark, and desiring them to come and fetch it; which accordingly they did, and placed it in the house of one Abinadab, (whose son was consecrated to keep it) and there it continued for the space of twenty years.

Upon the death of Eli, Samuel succeeded to the government; and having called the people together, very probably upon the occasion of removing the ark from Bethshemesh to Kirjath-jearim, * he exhorted them very earnestly to renounce their idolatrous practices, and to devote themselves entirely to the worship of God, and then they need not doubt but that he would deliver them from all their enemies. This the people promised him faithfully to do; so that Samuel dismissed them for the present, but ordered them to meet him again, within a certain time, at † Mizpeh.

Here they held a solemn fast and humiliation to the Lord. They wept and prayed, confessed their sins, offered sacrifices, and ‡ made libations; and Samuel took this opportunity to administer justice among them. The Philistines hearing of this their assembly, took the alarm, and coming upon them unawares, put them into no small consternation. Upon Samuel's sacrifice and intercession, however, God declared himself mani-

* The speech which, according to Josephus, Samuel makes to the people upon this occasion, is to this effect:—"Ye men of Israel, since ye find by experience that the malice of your enemies is implacable, and that your earnest supplications to God for relief are graciously received; you should do well to consider, that your wishing for the freedom you want will never do the business, without exerting your power to the uttermost upon the proper means of procuring it; for to do otherwise is but praying one way and acting another. Wherefore, in the first place, be careful not to bring scandal upon your profession by ill manners, but turn yourselves to the love and practice of justice, without partiality or corruption. Purge your minds of all gross affections. Turn to God, call upon him, adore him, and honour him in your lives and conversations as well as with your lips. Do good things, and good will come on it, i. e. liberty and victory; for these are blessings not to be obtained by force of men, strength of body, or bands of soldiers, but God, who is truth itself, has promised them as the rewards of probity and righteousness; and you may depend upon it he will never disappoint you." *Jewish Antiq.* lib. vi. c. 2.

† The Mizpeh here mentioned (as appears from the circumstances of the story) must be different from that which is remarked in the history of Jephthah. There is indeed another Mizpeh mentioned among

the cities of Judah (Josh. xv. 38.), and a third among those of Benjamin. (Josh. xviii. 26.) Some are of opinion, that these two cities are one and the same, and are only supposed to be two, because they lie in the confines of each tribe; but if they are not the same, it seems most probable that the Mizpeh in the tribe of Benjamin was the city which is here spoken of. And we may observe farther, that as Mizpeh is said to be situated not far from Eben-ezer, and probably on the east or north side; so Shen (if it be the name of a place, and not rather of some sharp rock thereabouts) was situated not far from it, on the opposite, i. e. on the west, or south-west side, to which Bethcar must needs be contiguous. *Wells's Geography of the Old Testament*, vol. iii. c. 1.

‡ The words in our translation run thus:—"And they gathered to Mizpeh, and drew water, and poured it out before the Lord," 1 Sam. vii. 6; But what we are to understand by this water, the conjectures of commentators have been very various. Some take these words in a metaphorical sense, to denote those tears of contrition which were drawn, as it were, from the bottom of their hearts, and fell from their eyes before the Lord. Others think, that with this water they washed their bodies (as they are supposed to have done upon another occasion, *Exod.* xix. 10.) to signify the purification of their souls from the pollution of sin. Others, that they made use of it to

festly in favour of the Israelites : for as soon as the fight began, there was heard * such a dreadful peal of thunder, as struck terror and amazement into the enemy, so that they betook themselves instantly to flight, and were pursued by the Israelites as far as Bethcar. The truth is, this was so signal a victory, that for a long time the Philistines durst not appear upon the frontiers of Israel, but were forced to restore the cities which they had taken from them ; so that Samuel had good reason to set up a monument (which he did between Mizpeh and Shen, calling it *Ebenexer*, i. e. *the stone of help*) in memory of so great a deliverance.

From 1 Sam.
i. to the end.

After this action, the most part of Samuel's government was employed in a peaceable administration of justice. For which purpose he took a circuit every year round a great tract of the country ; but, as he grew in years, he appointed his two sons, Joel and Abiah, to the execution of that office, who, degenerating *² from their father's example, became such mercenary and corrupt judges, that the elders of Israel came in a body to Samuel, complained of the grievances they lay under, by reason of his infirmity, and his sons male-administration, and thereupon demanded to have the form of their government changed, and a king instituted among them, as there was in other nations.

This demand was far from being agreeable to Samuel ; however he consulted God upon it, who gave him answer—that he should comply with the people in what they desired, notwithstanding the affront did terminate not so much upon Samuel as himself ; but before they proceeded to the choice of a king, he ordered him to acquaint them with what his prerogatives were, and what rights they might expect that he would demand from them ; and withal to inform them, † that slavery to them and their

cleanse the ground where Samuel was to erect an altar, that it might not stand upon an impure place. Some suppose that it was employed as an emblem of humiliation, of prayer, of expiation, of execration, and I know not what besides. But the most probable opinion is, that this water was upon this occasion poured out, by way of libation, before God : and, for the support of this, it is commonly alleged, that libations of this kind were very customary in ancient times ; that Theophrastus, as he is cited by Porphyry, (de Abst. lib. ii.) tells us, that the earliest libations were of water, though afterwards honey and wine came into request ; that Virgil (*Æneid* iv.) mentions the practice of sprinkling the water of the lake of Avernus ; and that Homer (*Odys.* xii.) remarks, that for want of wine the companions of Ulysses poured out water in a sacrifice, which they offered to the gods. It is certain, that David “poured out unto the Lord” the water which the three gallant men in his army brought him “from the well of Bethlehem,” at the hazard of their lives, 2 Sam. xxiii. 16. and therefore, though the law does not enjoin any such libations of water ; yet, since there is no positive prohibition of them, why may we not suppose, that, upon this extraordinary occasion, something singular and extraordinary might have been done ? *Patrick's* and *Calmet's* Commentaries.

* Josephus gives us this account of the whole transaction :—“In some places God shook the foundations of the earth under the feet of the Philistines, so that they could not stand without staggering : in others, it opened and swallowed them up alive, before they knew where they were ; while the claps of thunder and flashes of fire were so violent, that their very eyes and limbs were scorched to such a degree, that

they could neither see their way before them, nor handle their arms.” *Jewish Antiq.* lib. vi. c. 2.

*² It may possibly be made a question,—why God did not punish Samuel, as he did Eli, for the wickedness of his sons ? But to this it may be answered, that Samuel's sons were not so bad as those of Eli ; since taking bribes privately was not like openly profaning the tabernacle, and making the worship of God contemptible. And, besides this, it is possible that Samuel might be ignorant of the corruption of his sons ; since he lived at Ramah, and they at Beersheba. *Patrick's* Commentary.

† The rules of conduct which God prescribes to the person that should at any time be constituted king over Israel, are of a quite different sort to these practices. “He shall not multiply horses to himself, neither shall he multiply wives to himself, neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver or gold. He shall write him a copy of the law in a book, and he shall read therein all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the Lord his God, and to keep all the words of this law, and these statutes, to do them, that his heart be not lifted up above his brethren, and that he turn not aside from the commandments, to the right-hand, or to the left,” Deut. xvii. 16, &c. So that Samuel does not, in the words before us, define what are the just rights of kings, but describes only such practices as the kings of the east, who were despotic princes, and looked upon their subjects as so many slaves, were generally accustomed to : and the prophet had some reason to draw a king in those black colours, because the Israelites desired such a one as their neighbours had, who were all under the absolute dominion of their princes. *Le Clerc's* and *Calmet's* Commentaries.

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children, subjection to the meanest offices, loss of liberty, heavy taxes, constant war, and many other inconveniences, would be the consequence of a kingly power. But † all these remonstrances availed nothing; the people persist in their desire of a king, and God tells Samuel, that he will not fail to give them one.

The appearance of Providence in the election of their king was indeed very remarkable. Saul the son of Kish, of the tribe of Benjamin, was a very tall, and handsome youth; and it so happening at this time, that some of his father's asses being gone astray, he, and a servant along with him, were sent to look for them. They wandered about a great way without gaining any intelligence, till coming to Ramah, the place of Samuel's residence, at his servant's instigation he went to advise with him concerning the asses. God had apprised Samuel with the coming of the person that day who was to be appointed king; and therefore Samuel, when he saw him, shewed him all the respect that was due to his future character. He took him with him †² to the high place, where he was going to sacrifice; he invited him to feast with him upon the sacrifices that were to be offered; and had invited thirty guests more to bear him company. He seated him in the highest place, and distinguished him likewise by ordering the choicest dishes to be served up to him. That evening he had a long conference with him in private, and the next morning, as he was waiting on him out of town, he ordered †³ the servant to be sent before, that he might acquaint him with God's purpose of exalting him to the regal dignity; and having †⁴ anointed him to be king of Israel, he fore-

† It is generally supposed, that what made the Israelites so urgent at this time for a king, was a present strait they thought themselves in for want of an able leader: For Nahash the king of the Amorites coming up to Jabesh-Gilead, and encamping before it, had put the inhabitants into such a fright, that, without more to do, they offered to surrender upon terms, telling him, that "they would become subjects to him, if he would make a league with them," 1 Sam. xi. 1. But the haughty Amorite, in contempt of Israel, let them know, that, if he made a league with them, the condition thereof should be, "that they should come out to him, and let him thrust out all their right eyes, and lay it for a reproach upon all Israel." The elders of Jabesh, in this sad circumstance, demanded seven days respite, that they might send messengers into all the coasts of Israel, and if in that time no succours arrived, they would submit. This, it is thought, was the reason for their pressing so hard upon Samuel at this time for a king; whereas their duty was, to have enquired of the Lord (as they had done at other times) who it was that he would be pleased to constitute the general in this exigence, to lead out their forces against their enemies. *Howell's History*, in the Notes.

†² In several places of Scripture, the Canaanites are said to have had their high places, whereon they worshipped their idols, but this is the first instance of any belonging to the people of God; and it is the opinion of some learned men, that this appointment of a private or inferior place of worship (even while the ark and tabernacle were in being) by so great an authority as that of Samuel, gave rise to the institution of synagogues and proseuchas in so many places of the kingdom afterwards. *Patrick's Commentary*.

†³ This was with design to let Saul understand, that what he was going to do was by the Divine order

and appointment; and that when it should come to the casting of lots, (as it did afterwards, 1 Sam. x. 20.) he might perceive that he was not chosen king by chance of a lot. There might be likewise this further reason for Samuel's bidding Saul to send away his servant, viz. lest the people, suspecting Samuel to do this by his own will, more than by God's appointment, might be inclinable to mutiny. Since this royal unction then was only designed for Saul's private satisfaction, it was necessary not to have it published before the people had proceeded to a public election of their king. *Howell's History*, in the Notes.

†⁴ We read of no express command for the anointing of kings; and yet it is plain from the parable of Jotham, Judg. ix. 8. that this was a custom two hundred years before this time. Why oil, rather than any other liquid, was the symbol of conveying a regal authority, we are nowhere informed. It is true, that God directed Moses to consecrate Aaron to the high priest's office, by anointing his head with oil, Exod. xxix. 7. But the anointing of kings, we may presume, was of a prior date. Unction indeed, in the days of Jacob, was the common method of setting apart from common use even things inanimate, Gen. xxviii. 18. and therefore it may well be supposed, that persons of such designations, as kings were, were all along admitted by the same ceremony, which might be of Divine appointment, perhaps at the first institution of government, in the antediluvian world, and thence handed down, by a long tradition, to future generations. This rite of unction, in short, was so much the Divine care, that we find God giving Moses a prescription how to make the consecrating oil, Exod. xxx. 23. But though Solomon was anointed with oil taken from the tabernacle, yet since Samuel was no priest, and could not therefore have access to the tabernacle, which at this time was at some distance from him, it is more reasonable to think (though some

told him several † events which should befall him in his return home, in token of the truth of his designation to that office. From 1 Sam. i. to the end.

Thus Saul was appointed king; but then it was only between Samuel and himself. To make his choice and inauguration therefore more public, Samuel called an assembly of the people together at Mizpeh, to which place the ark of the Lord was brought, that they might with more solemnity proceed to the election of a king. The method of their electing was this:—First, the lot was cast for every tribe separately, to know out of which the king was to be chosen, and the lot fell upon that of Benjamin; next, it was cast for all the families of this tribe, and fell upon that of Mitri; and, lastly, it was cast for all the persons of this family, and fell upon Saul, the son of Kish; who, when he came into the assembly (for he chose to be absent at the time of the election), and had been recommended by Samuel in a short speech upon that occasion, appeared so portly, and with so much majesty, that he gained the affections and good wishes of all, except some few disorderly persons, who disapproved of the choice, and (in pure contempt) refused to †² make him the usual presents; which Saul could not but perceive, though, in point of prudence, he thought proper at that time †³ to overlook it.

Saul had not been many days upon the throne before their happened a fit occasion for him to exert himself. Nahash, king of the Ammonites, laid siege to †⁴ Jabesh-Gilead on the the other side of Jordan, and had so closely begirt it, that the people offered to capitulate; but on no better conditions would he permit them, than that each man should have †⁵ his right eye put out. Hereupon they sent to Gibeah to demand aid of

Jewish Doctors will have it otherwise) that what he made use of, upon this occasion, was no more than common oil. *Patrick's Commentary.*

† The events which Samuel told Saul he should meet with in his return home, were these:—That near Rachel's tomb he should meet two men, who should inform him, that his father's asses were found again; that, departing thence, he would meet three men going to Bethel, one of them carrying three kids, another three cakes of bread, and the third a bottle of wine, and that they should give him two parts thereof; and that when he came to Geba (which was commonly called the hill of God), where there was a garrison of the Philistines, he should meet a company of prophets going into the city, where the Spirit of God should fall upon him, and he (to the wonder of all that should hear him) should begin to prophecy among them; all which signs happened exactly as Samuel had foretold them, 1 Sam. x. 2, &c.

†² It was a constant custom among the eastern nations, and is even to this day, whenever they approached the prince, to present him with something; but here, in the case of Saul, at his first accession to the throne, it was the proper method of recognising him. The Chaldee paraphrase says, that “they did not come to salute him, or wish him an happy reign: but this is the same thing, because the first salutation offered to a king was always attended with presents, which carried with them a sign of peace and friendship, of congratulation and joy, and of subjection and obedience. *Calmet's Commentary.*

†³ In this Saul acted a very wise and politic part, as being unwilling to begin his reign with any disorder or tumult, which his just resentment of such an affront might perhaps have occasioned. These sons of Belial (as they are termed) were, very likely, per-

sons of some rank and quality, and therefore they despised Saul, for his having been related to a small tribe, and sprung from an obscure family. If then he had taken notice of this affront, and not revenged it, he had shewn himself mean-spirited; and if he had resented it as it deserved, he might both have provoked a party against him, and, at his first setting out, incurred the censure of rashness and cruelty: a prejudice which, in the future course of his reign, would have been far from doing him any good. *Howell's History, in the Notes.*

†⁴ This town lay on the east side of Jordan, and not far distant from the Ammonites, who besieged it. It was in being in the times of Eusebius and St Jerome, and was situate upon a hill about six miles distant from Pella, as one goes to Gerasa. It is sometimes in Scripture simply called Jabesh; and what the inhabitants thereof are farther remarkable for, is, their grateful remembrance of the benefits they had received from Saul, when, after his death, having heard that the “Philistines had fastened his body to the wall of Bethshan, they went all night, and took the body of Saul, and the bodies of his sons from the wall, and came to Jabesh, and burnt them there, and took their bones, and buried them under a tree at Jabesh, and fasted seven days;” for which they were highly commended by David, 2 Sam. ii. 5. *Wells's Geography of the Old Testament, vol. iii.*

†⁵ The reason why Nahash was for having their right eyes put out, was not only to bring a reproach upon Israel, as himself declares, but to disable them likewise from serving in war; for, as the manner of fighting in those days was chiefly with bow and arrow, sword and shield, the loss of the right eye made them incapable of either; because, in combat, the left eye is covered with the shield, and in shooting with the

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king Saul † in the space of seven days, (for that was all the time allowed them); and he, having summoned all Israel to come to their assistance upon pain of death, in a very short time had an army of three hundred thousand Israelites, besides thirty thousand of the tribe of Judah, and with these he promised to relieve the besieged the very next day. Nor was he worse than his word; for, dividing his army into three parts, and falling upon the besiegers about break of day, he so totally routed and dispersed them, that scarce two of them were left together.

This victory, †² and the deliverance which it procured from a barbarous and insulting enemy, raised their new king's fame to such a degree, that some, remembering the indignities that were put upon him at his coronation, were (in the height of their zeal) for having them now punished with death; but Saul very prudently opposed the motion, and expressed his aversion to have the glories of that day sullied with the blood of any of his subjects.

From this victory, however, Samuel took occasion to give those who had hitherto refused their allegiance, an opportunity of coming in, and recognizing the king; and for that purpose ordered a general meeting at Gilgal to confirm Saul's election; which accordingly was celebrated with mirth and joy between both king and people, as well as with sacrifices and thanksgivings to God, as the author of all their successes.

Samuel was, at this time, to resign the government entirely into the hands of Saul; and therefore, in the speech which he made upon this occasion, he insisted not a little upon the vindication of his own administration. He reminded them of the great transgressions which they and their forefathers had committed; he set before them the blessings consequent upon their obedience, and the judgments which would certainly attend their disobedience to the laws of God; he gave them to understand, that they had been * far from doing an acceptable thing to God, in rejecting his government, and desiring a king; and (that they might not think that he mentioned this out of any pre-

bow, it is usual to wink with it, so that depriving them of their right eye made them useless in war: and yet this barbarous king thought it not proper to put out both their eyes; for then he would have made them utterly incapable of doing him the service, or acquiring the tribute for him which he expected from them. *Calmet's Commentary.*

† It may seem a little strange, that this barbarous prince should be willing to give the Jabeshites the respite of seven days; but Josephus assigns this reason for it, viz. that he had so mean an opinion of the people, that he made no difficulty to comply with their request. Saul indeed had been appointed king, but having not as yet taken upon him the government, he lived, just as he did before, in a private condition, 1 Sam. xi. 5. So that had he, upon this notice, endeavoured to levy an army, he could scarce think it possible to be done in so short a space as seven days: and therefore he thought he might grant them these conditions without any danger, and without driving them to desperation, as he might have done, had he denied them their request. *Patrick's Commentary.*

†² Josephus acquaints us, that Saul did not content himself with barely relieving Jabesh, but carried on a war against the Ammonites, slew their king, laid waste their country, enriched his army with spoils, and brought the people safe and victorious to their homes again. *Jewish Antiq. lib. vi. c. 6.*

* That part of the speech which Josephus introduces Samuel as making to the people, and complain-

ing of their importunity for a change of government, is conceived in these terms:—"What should you choose another king for, after the experience of so many signal mercies, and miraculous deliverances, while you were under God's protection, and owned him for your governor? You have forgotten the story of your forefather Jacob's coming into Egypt with only seventy men in his train, and purely for want of bread; how God provided for them, and, by his blessing, how they increased and multiplied. You have forgotten the slavery and oppression they groaned under, till, upon their cries and supplications for relief, God rescued them himself, without the help of kings, by the hands of Moses and Aaron, who brought them out of Egypt into the land you are now possessed of. How can you then be so ungrateful now, after so many blessings and benefits received, as to depart from the reverence and allegiance you owe to so powerful and so merciful a protector? How often have you been delivered up into the hands of your enemies for your apostacy and disobedience, and as often afterward restored to God's favour, and your liberty, upon your humiliation and repentance? Who was it but God that gave you victory first over the Assyrians, then over the Ammonites, and then over the Moabites, and last of all over the Philistines, not by the influence and direction of kings, but under the conduct of Jephthah and Gideon? What madness has possessed you then, to abandon an heavenly governor for an earthly? &c." *Jewish Antiq. lib. vi. c. 6.*

judge, or indeed without a Divine direction) he gave them this sign:—That God would immediately send a storm of thunder and rain, which, in the † time of wheat harvest, (as it was then) was a thing very unusual; and this coming to pass according to his prediction, so terrified the people, that they acknowledged their offence, and entreated Samuel to intercede for them; which he not only promised them to do, but to assist them likewise with his best instructions, so long as they adhered to the observation of God's laws; but if they despised them, they were to expect to be destroyed, "both they and their king."

From 1 Sam.
i. to the end.

After this victory over the Ammonites, Saul, in the second year of his reign, disbanded all his army except three thousand men, two of which he kept for his body-guard, and the other thousand were to attend his son Jonathan; who, being a prince of great bravery, had taken an opportunity, and cut off a garrison of the Philistines in ‡² Geba, which in effect was a declaration of war.

The Philistines upon this occasion raised a very powerful army, which consisted of † three thousand chariots, six thousand horse, and a multitude of foot almost innumerable, and came and encamped at ‡² Michmash. The Israelitish army, which was to rendezvous at Gilgal, came in but very slowly, and of those that did, several were so faint-hearted as to hide themselves in the rocks and caves; and others, thinking themselves never safe enough, retired even beyond the Jordan. The truth is, that both prince and people were sadly intimidated, because Samuel, whose company at this junc-

† It is an observation of St Jerom, that this harvest in Judea began about the end of June or the beginning of July, in which season thunder and rain was never known, but only in the spring and autumn, the one called *the former*, and the other *the latter rain*; and therefore Samuel by this preamble, "Is it not wheat harvest to day?" Chap. xii. 17. meant to signify the greatness of the miracle God was going to work; that he could in an instant, and in a time when they least of all expected it, deprive them of all the comforts of life, as they justly deserved, for their rejecting him and his prophet, who was so powerful with him, as, by his prayers, to produce such wonders. *Patrick's*, *Calmet's* and *Le Clerc's* Commentaries.

‡² Among the cities of Benjamin, mentioned in Joshua xviii. 24, &c. we read of Gaba, Gibeah, and Gibeon; and in Joshua xxi. 17. we read, that the two cities given to the children of Aaron out of the tribe of Benjamin, were Gibeon and Geba; whence it is not to be doubted, but that Gaba, mentioned in the xviiith chapter, was the same with Geba, that we read of in Chap. xxi. But then it will no ways follow, that this Geba or Gaba is the same with Gibeah, because this Gibeah was the royal city where Saul dwelt, and is therefore expressly called Gibeah of Saul; and for that reason it cannot be supposed, that the Philistines, at this time, had a garrison there. *Wells's* Geography of the Old Testament, vol. iii.

‡ The words in the original, and in our translation, are thirty thousand; but the Syriac and Arabic versions (which we have thought proper to follow) make them no more than three thousand: And indeed whoever considers that Pharaoh king of Egypt, when he had mustered all his forces together, could bring no more than six hundred of these chariots into the field, and all the other princes, whose equipages are related

in Scripture, much fewer, must needs think it a thing incredible that the Philistines, out of their small territories, which extended no farther than the two tribes of Simeon and Dan along the coasts of the Mediterranean Sea, could ever be able to raise so vast an armament; no, nor all the nations that they could possibly call in to their assistance. For besides that, in the account of all armies, the cavalry is always more numerous than the chariots of war, (which is different here) the largest armies, that we ever read of were able to compass a very few of these chariots in comparison of the number here specified. Mithridates, in his vast army, had but a hundred; Darius but two; and Antiochus Epiphanes (2 Mac. xiii. 2.) but three. So that we must either say that the transcribers made a mistake in the Hebrew copy, or (with some other commentators) suppose, that this thirty thousand chariots were not chariots of war, but most of them carriages only, for the conveyance of the baggage belonging to such a vast multitude of men, or for the deportation of the plunder they hoped to be masters of by having conquered the country. *Le Clerc's* Commentary, and *Univer. Hist.*

‡² Eusebius and St Jerome inform us, that in their time there was a large town of this name lying about nine miles from Jerusalem, near Ramah; and the text tells us that it was eastward from Beth-aven. Now Beth-aven, which signifies "the house of iniquity," is supposed to be the same with Bethel, and was so called after that Jeroboam the son of Nebat had set up his golden calves to be worshipped here: But, as Bethel lay to the east of Michmash, and not Michmash to the east of Bethel, as the text seems to say, the translation should be, that they encamped at Michmash, having Beth-aven on the east, i. e. they seized on that post which Saul had before in Michmash on Mount Bethel, ver. 2. *Calmet's* Commentary.

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ture was impatiently expected, was not yet come; so that the king, fearing that the enemy would fall upon him before he had made his addresses to God for success, ordered sacrifices to be made; and the burnt-offering was just finished when news was brought him that Samuel was arrived.

Samuel had told him before-hand, that by the expiration of seven days he would not fail to meet him at Gilgal; and therefore, being offended at his diffidence and impatience, he not only sharply rebuked him, but declared likewise that God, by this way of proceeding, would in time be provoked to remove the kingdom from him and his posterity, and give it to another that better deserved it; and so, having left Gilgal, he went to Gibeah, whither Saul and his son Jonathan followed him with a small army of about six thousand, and these so badly provided for action, that they had no manner of weapons but what they could make out of their working tools, because the Philistines would not at that time * permit so much as a smith to live among them.

While the Philistine army lay at Michmash, they sent out parties several ways to ravage the country, and met with no manner of opposition, till Jonathan, accompanied with † his armour-bearer only, found means to ascend a steep rock where the enemy least of all expected an invasion, and so falling upon them unawares, in a short time killed about twenty of them; which put the rest †² into such a consternation, that, mis-

* The precaution which the Philistines took to hinder the Israelites from providing themselves with weapons is no more than what other conquerors have done to the nations they have vanquished. Porsenna, when he made peace with the Romans, restrained them from the use of all iron, but what was necessary in the tillage of their ground. Cyrus, when he subdued the Lydians, for fear of a revolt took from them the use of arms, and, instead of a laborious life spent in war, suffered them to sink into softness and luxury, so that they soon lost their ancient valour: And (to instance in one prince more) Nebuchadnezzar, when he had made himself master of Judea, took along with him into Babylon all the craftsmen and smiths, that the poorest of the people which he left behind might be in no condition to rebel, 2 Kings xxiv. 14. The only wonder is, why the Israelites, after they had regained their liberty under the government of Samuel, and given the Philistines so total an overthrow at Eben-ezer, did not restore these artificers, and so provide themselves with proper arms against the next occasion? But, besides the extreme sloth and negligence which appears in the Israelites whole conduct during this period, it was not so easy a matter, in so short a time, to recover a trade that was lost; especially among a people that had no iron mines, and were so wholly addicted to the feeding of cattle, that they made no account of any mechanical arts. In the famous victory which they gained over Sisera, we are told, that "there was not a shield or spear seen among fifty thousand men of Israel," Judg. v. 8. but, notwithstanding this, they had bows, and arrows, and slings, which the men of Gibeah could manage to a wonderful advantage, Judg. xx. 16. And besides these, the Israelites, upon this occasion, might convert their instruments of husbandry, their hatchets, their spades, their forks, their mattocks, &c. into instruments of war; a much better shift than what we read of some, who, in ancient times, had no other

arms than clubs, and sharpened stakes hardened in the fire.

——Non jam certamine agresti

Stipitibus duris agitur, sudibusque præustis.

Virgil, Æneid 7.

† This action of Jonathan's, considered in itself, was doubtless a very rash attempt, and contrary to the laws of war, which prohibit all under command (as he was) from engaging the enemy, or entering upon any enterprise without the general's order; but what may very justly be said in excuse of it is,—That he had a Divine incitation to it, which he might probably feel upon the sight of the Philistines appearing as if they intended to assault Gibeah, and upon the information which he might receive, of the great spoil which the three parties made of the poor people in the country. *Patrick's Commentary.*

†² How two men could put the whole army into such a consternation may seem somewhat extraordinary; but it should be considered that Jonathan and his armour-bearer, climbing up a way that was never attempted before, might come upon them unawares, and surprise them; that this action might happen (as Josephus thinks) early in the morning, when a great part of the Philistines army was asleep; that even, had they been all awake, Jonathan might have so posted himself (as Horatius Cocles did on a bridge) as to be able to maintain his pass against all the force of the enemy; that those who made at him (as only one perhaps could come at a time) he with one stroke might lay flat on the ground, and his armour-bearer immediately dispatch them; that the rest, seeing them act thus intrepidly, might take them for two scouts, or vancouriers only of a great army that was coming up and ready to fall upon them; that the army of the Philistines, being made up of different nations, might be in the greater confusion, as either not understanding, or else suspecting one another; and (what might complete their consternation) that God at this time

trusting friends for foes, they began to slaughter and destroy one another. Saul had soon intelligence of this disorder in the enemy's camp, and therefore, willing to make the most of such an opportunity, he got together what forces he could, and fell upon the Philistines with such fury, that he totally routed and defeated them. From 1 Sam. i. to the end.

In the heat of the chase he caused proclamation to be made, that (upon pain of death) none should dare to eat any thing until it was night, that the slaughter of the enemy might not be retarded. But herein he defeated his own purpose; for the people, for want of refreshment, grew faint in the pursuit, so that the enemy escaped into their own country: And (what was another grievous consequence of this interdict) his son Jonathan, who had been absent when the proclamation was made, had like to have fallen a sacrifice to his father's rash vow, * merely for eating a little honey when he was ready to die with hunger, had not the people interposed, and pleaded the merit of that young prince, to whom the honour of the day was chiefly owing.

After this victory Saul ruled the kingdom with an higher hand, and repulsed his enemies wherever they assailed him. He had indeed a very large and flourishing family. Ahinoam, the daughter of Ahimaaz, was his wife; Jonathan, Abinadab, Ishbosheth and Malchishua, were his sons; Michal and Merab his daughters; Abner, his cousin-german, was general of his forces; and, as himself was a warlike prince, God made choice of him to put in execution a sentence, (a) which many years before he had decreed against the Amalekites, for their opposing the Israelites in their passage out of the land of Egypt.

His commission was utterly to destroy the Amalekites, men, women, and children, and to leave not so much as one creature of any kind alive: But, instead of executing this according to the letter of the precept, *² he saved Agag their king, and the best of the cattle alive; and when Samuel came to expostulate the matter with him, his pretence was, that what he had spared was in pure respect to God, in order to have them offered to him in sacrifice. But Samuel, who knew very well that this reserve was made out of a principle of avarice more than devotion, first laid before him the iniquity of his conduct, and then declared to him God's immoveable purpose of alienating the kingdom from his family; which made so deep an impression upon him, that he acknowledged his fault, intreated the prophet (who was going abruptly to leave him) to stay and make intercession for him, and so far to honour him before the people (from whom he apprehended a revolt) as to join with him in worship to God, which Samuel consent-

might send a panic fear upon them, which, whenever he does it, (even in the opinion of heathens themselves) is enough to make the stoutest tremble, and the most heroic spirits betake themselves to flight.

Ἐν γὰρ δαίμονίσι φόβος
Φεύγονται καὶ παῖδες Θεῶν.

Pind. Nemea 9.

* When Saul told his son Jonathan, that for eating this honey, contrary to his interdict, he should surely die, "because the reverence which he had for his vow was more to him than all the kindred and tenderness of nature," Josephus introduces the son making his father an answer not unlike that which Jephthah's daughter upon a like occasion returned to him: "That death (says he) shall be welcome to me which acquits my father of the obligation of a religious vow, and only befalls me in consequence of so glorious a victory to him that gave me being. I have lived long enough, since I have lived to see the pride and insolence of the Philistines brought down by the Hebrews, which will serve me for a consolation in all my other sufferings." And the historian tells us farther,

that the whole multitude was so charmed with the piety and bravery of the young man, that, in an ecstasy of tenderness and compassion, they took him away out of the hands of his incensed father, with an oath, "that they would not suffer an hair of that person's head to be touched, who had been so instrumental in a victory that tended to the preservation of them all. *Antiq. lib. vi. c. 7.*

(a) Vid. Exod. xvii. 8, &c. and Deut. xxv. 17, &c.

*² Josephus seems to hint, that Saul saved this Amalekite king alive, because he was taken with the comeliness and majesty of his person; but others rather think, that he intended him to decorate his triumph. For when it is said of Saul, that he came to Carmel after this victory, and "set him up a place," 1 Sam. xv. 12. the word *Jab*, they say, will signify an *arch*, as well as any thing else; and thence they conclude, that Saul's purpose was to erect a triumphal arch, in memory of his defeat of the Amalekites; and that he kept their king alive, to be led captive in that magnificent procession, wherein he was to make a display of his victory. *Calmet's Commentary.*

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ed to do: But, before he departed, he ordered Agag (who by this time began to hope for mercy) to be brought forth to him, and himself with his own hands fell upon him and slew him.

This was the last interview which Samuel had with Saul; for, after this action, he retired to his house at Ramah, where (though he visited Saul no more) he ceased not to lament the sad condition into which he was fallen. It was not long however before God awoke him out of his pensive mood, and sent him to Bethlehem, under colour of sacrificing there, to anoint David, the son of Jesse, king and successor to Saul. Jesse had eight sons, and when Samuel came to his house, seven of them were brought before him. Eliab, the eldest, was a goodly personage, and him the prophet supposed at first sight to have been the person whom God had pitched upon to succeed Saul; but being instructed otherwise, and, upon enquiry, finding that Jesse had another son, who at that time was in the fields keeping the sheep, he ordered him to be sent for; and, as he was a very fair and beautiful youth, immediately upon his entering the room, he perceived that he was the person whom God had made choice of; and accordingly he took an opportunity, and † singling him out from the rest of his brethren, poured oil on his head, and anointed him king. Nor was the ceremony useless; for, from that time forward, David found himself inwardly possessed with a spirit of wisdom, and prudence, and courage, and other qualifications, both of body and mind, that are requisite in a prince*.

Saul, in the mean time, declined more and more in the favour of God; and as he was naturally *² of a timorous and suspicious temper, an unhappy turn of mind grew upon him, and settled at last in a confirmed melancholy, but such an one as was frequently attended with violent perturbations, and sometimes with direct frenzy. In this condition some of his courtiers advised him to music, which would be of some use to lull his disturbed mind to rest; and accordingly recommended David, not only as an excellent master this way, but a man of other rare qualifications, both internal and external, enough to engage his favour.

Upon this recommendation he was sent for to court, where Saul was greatly taken with the beauty of his person; but when he heard him exercise his skill upon the harp, he was pleased above measure, and quite transported from all uneasy and melancholic thoughts. Saul, in short, conceived such a kindness for David for having cured him of

† Our translation says, that "Samuel anointed him in the midst of his brethren; and for this it is pretended, that as this unction was a solemn act, and the only title which David had to the kingdom, it was necessary to have it done in the presence of some witnesses, for which purpose none were more proper than those of his own family. But it is plain, from his brother Eliab's treating him after this, (1 Sam. xvii. 28.) that he was not privy to his being anointed king elect over God's people; and therefore, since the words will equally bear the sense of from the midst, as well as in the midst of his brethren, it is more reasonable to suppose, that as this was the ceremony of his designation to the kingdom only, few or none (except his father perhaps) were admitted to it. And there was the less reason for witnesses upon this occasion, because David never laid claim to the crown till after Saul's decease, and was then, at two several times: 1st, When he was made king over the tribe of Judah; and, 2d, When made king over all the tribes of Israel, anointed publicly. *Calmet's* and *Patrick's* Commentaries, and *Howell's* History, in the Notes.

* They who credit the Scripture history in this affair, will easily account for these extraordinary accomplishments [and improvements; for that assures us, "that the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward," 1 Sam. xvi. 13. and I should be glad to learn from those who do not credit this circumstance of the history in the strict sense of the text, how otherwise they can account for these extraordinary effects and endowments which immediately ensued David's designation to the throne; how a designation to empire, I say, which, in its ordinary course, is too apt to corrupt, debase, and overset with vanity, should raise an obscure youth, uneducated, and little accounted of even in the esteem of a parent's partiality, in an obscure age and country, without the advantage either of instruction or example, into the greatest musician, the noblest poet, and the most consummate hero of all antiquity. *The Life of David, by the author of Revelation Examined.*

** [It is not said in Scripture that he was naturally timorous.]

his malady, that he made him one of his armour-bearers, though David, when he found the king better, returned to his father's house again. from 1 Sam. i. to the end.

The Philistines not long before had received a remarkable defeat from Saul; but having now recruited their forces, they came and encamped between † Succoth and Azekah, while Saul, with his army, took ground upon the hill that is above the valley of Elah, which separated the two camps. While the armies lay thus facing each other, a champion named Goliath, of a prodigious gigantic stature, * being full ten feet high, with arms and armour proportionable, came out of the camp of the Philistines for forty days successively, and challenged any one of the Israelites to a single combat. *² This single combat was to decide the fate of the war: but none of the Israelites durst adventure upon it, until David, who happened at this time to come to the camp †² with provisions for his three elder brethren that were then in the service, seeing this great gigantic creature thus vaunt himself, and hearing withal what reward the king had promised to

† Succoth and Azekah lay to the south of Jerusalem, and the east of Bethlehem, about four leagues from the former, and five from the latter; and the ancient valley of Elah must consequently lie not far distant from them, though later travellers place it at no more than a league's distance from Jerusalem. *Calmet's Commentary*.

* The words in the text are,—“Whose height was six cubits and a span;” so that, taking a cubit to be twenty inches and a half, and a span to be nine inches and a little more, the whole will amount to about twelve feet and an half: a stature above as tall again as usual! The lowest computation of the cubit however brings it to near ten feet, which is the standard that we have set it at; though it must not be dissembled, that both the Septuagint and Josephus have reduced it to little more than eight feet, which but badly comports with the weight and vastness of his armour, though it might suit their design perhaps, in accommodating their account to the credibility of their heathen readers. But be that as it will, several authors (to shew this vast size of the man not to be beyond the bounds of probability) have written *ex professo de gigantibus*; among whom Harmannus Conringius, in his book *de antiquo Statu Holmstadii*, and in another, *de Habitu Corporum Germanorum*, have demonstrated, that the ancient Germans were of a vast size, even as Cæsar, *de Bello Gall.* testifies of them, by calling them *immani Corporum Magnitudine Homines*, men of a huge greatness of body. Nay, even Josephus himself, who is quoted for denying the existence of giants, furnishes us with an argument in their behalf, when he gives us an account of some bones of a prodigious size which were found in Hebron; as Acosta, in his *History of the Indies*, lib. i. c. 10. makes mention of bones of an incredible bigness, and of a race of giants of such an height, that an ordinary man could scarce reach their knees. *Le Clerc's* and *Patrick's* Commentaries, *Calmet's* Dictionary under the word *Goliath*, and *Dissert.* of the Giants.

*² The words in which Goliath's challenge is expressed, are these:—“Why are you come out to set your battle in array? Am I not a Philistine, and you servants to Saul? Chuse you a man for you, and let

him come down to me: If he be able to fight with me, and to kill me, then will we be your servants; but if I prevail against him, and kill him, then shall ye be our servants, and serve us,” 1 Sam. xvii. 8. Antiquity furnishes us with examples of several such like combats as Goliath here proposes, but with none more remarkable than that between the *Horatii* and *Curatii*, related by Livy, lib. i. c. 23. “In which case, (as Grotius expresses himself, *de Jure Belli et Pacis*, lib. ii. c. 23.) though the champions perhaps cannot, with all the innocence imaginable, engage in the combat, yet their respective states may at least allow of it as a less evil; as an expedient whereby a decision is made (without the effusion of much blood, or any considerable loss on either side) which of the two nations shall have the dominion over the other. Strabo (says he) makes mention of this as an ancient custom among the Greeks; and Æneas appeals to the Latins, whether it is not highly just and equitable that he and Turnus should determine the controversy between them in this manner?” But whether ever there was any combat, stipulated to be decisive of the quarrel between two contending nations, it is certain, that this speech of Goliath's was a mere brava-do, proceeding from an high opinion he had of his own matchless strength, as if he had been the whole support of the nation, which was to stand or fall together with him. For that he had no authority from the princes of the Philistines to make any such declaration, is evident from the event; since, so far were the Philistines from yielding themselves slaves to the Hebrews upon the death of this champion, that they made the best of their way into their own country, and there defended themselves, and fought many battles with them afterwards. *Saurin's* Dissertation, vol. iv. dissert. 32. and *Patrick's* and *Le Clerc's* Commentaries.

†² In those days it was customary for men to serve their king and country in the wars at their own expence; and therefore Jesse sent a supply of provisions to such of his sons as were in the service. But since he had other sons at home, while David was chiefly in the field, it seems to be a Divine direction that he sent him from the sheep upon this errand.

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the person that should kill him, viz. that he † would give him his daughter in marriage and ennoble his family, was moved by a Divine impulse to accept of the challenge, which he some ways discovered to the standers-by. His eldest brother Eliab, hearing such words drop from him, took him and reproved him for his rashness; but as his declaration by this time had reached the king's ears, the king sent for him, and, having surveyed his youth, told him with concern that he feared he would never be able to encounter a man that was so much older, and stronger, and a soldier from his cradle. * But to this David replied, that he had already done as great things as killing this giant could possibly be; that he had slain a lion and a bear with his bare hands, and therefore did not doubt, but that the same Almighty Power, which delivered him then, would not fail to shield and protect him now.

Saul was not a little pleased with this gallant answer; and, to equip him as well as he could for the combat, offered him his own armour; but when David had put it on, he found it too large and cumbersome; and therefore, taking only his staff, a sling, and †² five smooth stones, which he picked out of the brook that ran by, he advanced towards the Philistine, who, perceiving him to be but a youth, and of a fair effeminate complexion, took the thing as done in contempt and derision of him; and therefore he cursed him by his gods Dagon and Ashtaroth, and vowed to cut him in pieces the very moment he came at him. But David's reply was of another kind, viz. that he came against him, not in any confidence of his own strength, but in the name of that God, whose name he had blasphemed, and power defied: and with these words he let fly a stone at him with such force and direction, that it hit him on his forehead, and, †³ piercing his brain, sunk into it; so that he fell flat on his face, and David ran up to him, and with the giant's sword cut off his head; at the sight of which the Philistine army fled, and were pursued by the Hebrews as far as the gates of Ekron with a very great slaughter.

† This was no bad policy in Saul, to promise largely upon so important an occasion, forasmuch as Caleb won Kirjath-sepher by offering his daughter in marriage to the person that should take it; and David himself, when he came to the crown, encouraged his soldiers to assault the strong fort of Sion, by promising to make him commander in chief of all his forces who should first enter it. *Patrick's Commentary.*

* Josephus introduces David as reasoning with the king in this manner:—"David, perceiving, says he, that Saul took his measures from the common reason of other encounters, gave the king to understand, that this was not so much a challenge to the army as a defiance to heaven itself; neither was the combat to be taken, in truth, for a trial of skill between Goliath and David, but between Goliath and the Lord of Hosts. For it is not my arm, says he, that fights the battle, but the power of a gracious and invincible God, that many times brings to pass, even by the weakest instruments, the noblest of his Divine purposes for his greater glory." *Jewish Antiq.* lib. vi. c. 10.

†² Smooth stones, one would think, part best from the sling, and, as they meet with the least obstruction from the air, fly with the greatest rapidity, and in the most direct line; and yet Ludovicus de Dieu is of a quite contrary opinion, viz. that rough and sharp stones were properer for David's purpose; whereupon he translates the words, *five pieces of stone*, as the Hebrew, indeed, without its punctuation, will bear. But it is in vain to be nice and elaborate about trifles, since, of what form soever the stone which penetrated

Goliath's forehead was, it is plain, that it had both the direction and rapidity of its motion from the hand of God. [This is true; but God does not multiply miracles needlessly, and therefore there can be no doubt but that the stones were smooth, and as nearly spherical as could be found.]

†³ If it should be asked, how this could possibly be, when Goliath was armed so completely, and, in particular, is said to have had an "helmet of brass upon his head?" it is but supposing, that this arrogant champion, in disdain of his inferior combatant, might come negligently towards him, with his helmet turned back, and his forehead bare. It is highly probable, that when he made his menacing speech to David, he might turn back his helmet, both to speak and be heard more distinctly; and there was no such terror in David's appearance, as might induce him to cover his forehead again. But admitting he did, it is but supposing, that David levelled his stone so right as to hit the place which was left open for his adversary's eyes, or threw it with such a violent force, as would penetrate both helmet and head together. To make these suppositions more probable, we need only remember what we read in Judges, ch. xx. 16. of no less than seven hundred men in one place, who were so expert with their left hands, that every one could sling stones to an hair's breadth and not miss; or what we read in Diodorus Siculus, l. 5. of some slingers, who threw stones with such violence, that nothing could resist their impression. *Patrick and Calmet's Commentaries.*

When Saul saw David marching against the Philistine, he enquired of Abner, who he was? Which Abner could not resolve him; but, upon his return from victory, introduced him to the king with the champion's head in his hand. The king received him with the highest applauses; and, upon his enquiry, David informed him, that he was the son of Jesse the Bethlemite. Every one entertained indeed an high estimation of the author of so great an action, but none expressed so entire a satisfaction as did Jonathan; who, being himself a prince of extraordinary bravery, was so taken with his courage and conduct in this engagement, that he * contracted the tenderest and most indearing friendship with him, which lasted as long as they two lived together. but in their return home from this expedition, one thing happened which occasioned Saul's jealousy. Among the crowds that came out to meet them, and to grace their triumph, there was a chorus of women who sung to the musical instruments, upon which they played a certain song, whose chief burden was, "Saul has slain his thousands, and † David his ten thousands;" which so enraged Saul against David, that from that time he never looked on him with a gracious eye. For, though he thought proper to retain him in his service, and for the present conferred on him some command in the army; yet the reward for his killing Goliath, which was to be the marriage of his eldest daughter, ‡ he deprived him of by giving her to another.

From 1 Sam.
i. to the end.

When Saul returned to his own house, the same spirit of melancholy came upon him as before; and while David was touching his harp before him as usual, in order to alleviate his malady, the outrageous king threw a javelin at him with such fury as would certainly have destroyed him, had not Providence turned it aside. Hereupon David thought proper to withdraw; yet Saul would still continue him in his service to have the more opportunities against his life.

It happened too, that, by this time, his second daughter (whose name was Michal) had entertained kind thoughts of David, which her father was not unconscious of; and therefore he signified to him, that, upon condition he would kill him an hundred Philistines (but not without some hopes of himself falling in the attempt), he should have the honour to become the king's son-in-law. David accepted the condition, though he could not but perceive the latent malice of it; and, taking some choice men along with him, invaded the Philistines, slew double the number of them, and, for a testimony thereof, † sent their foreskins (according to covenant) to the king; so that all things

* Plutarch (in his book *περὶ Πολυφιλίας*) makes mention of several great men, such as Theseus and Perithous; Achilles and Patroclus; Orestes and Pyllades; Pythias and Damon, &c.; who were joined together "in the yoke of friendship," as he calls it. But none of these were comparable to what we read of Jonathan and David, who entered into the most sacred bonds of mutual assistance and defence to their very death, and of kindness to their posterity, even after either of them should be dead. Jonathan, in particular, through the whole story, shows towards David such a greatness of soul, such a constancy of mind, and disinterestedness of heart, as few romances can produce examples of. *Calmet's* and *Patrick's* Commentaries.

† Viz. in his killing Goliath; for all the conquest gained afterwards was no more than the consequence of his death.

‡ This was an high affront to David, and one of the greatest injuries that could be done him; however, for the present, he thought proper to dissemble it. How Jonathan resented this usage, we are no

where told. It is likely, that his duty to his father made him prevail with David to take it patiently, as coming from a man who was sometimes beside himself, and knew not well what he did; and that David might be the more inclinable to do this, as having some intimations given him of the good esteem which the second daughter began to entertain of him. *Patrick's* Commentary.

†³ The reason why Saul exacted the foreskins of David was to prevent all cheat or collusion in the matter, and that he might be sure they were Philistines only whom he killed. Had he demanded the heads only of so many men, David (he might think) might perhaps cut off those of his own subjects, and bring them instead of the Philistines; but now, the Philistines being the only neighbouring people who were uncircumcised (for the Arabians, as descended from Ishmael, and all the other nations which sprung from Esau, were circumcised as well as the Hebrews), in producing their foreskins there could be no deception. Besides that, this would be a gross insult upon the Philistines in general, to whom Saul was desirous

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being thus gallantly accomplished, and in so public a manner, the king could not refuse him his daughter, but, at the same time, laid many other schemes to take away his life. Nay, to such desperate lengths did his jealousy run him, that he, casting off all disguise, † commanded his son Jonathan, and some of the principal men of his court, at any rate to dispatch David; which Jonathan all along took care to acquaint him with, and at the same time advised him to provide himself with some place of safe retreat, until he should have an opportunity of * expostulating the matter with his father; which accordingly he did, and with so good success, that his father was (seemingly at least) reconciled to David, and Jonathan next day introduced him into his presence; but the increase of David's fame, upon several defeats given the Philistines, still renewing and increasing Saul's jealousy, would not suffer this reconciliation to last long. Saul was taken with another fit of frenzy, and David was desired to play to him: but while he was employed in tuning his harp, the other took an opportunity (as he had done before) of darting a javelin at him, which David, having a watchful eye upon him, nimbly declined, and so retired to his own house. Thither the king sent his guards, as soon as it was light, to apprehend him; but by the contrivance of his wife Michal (who let him down from a window) he made his escape, and, by the benefit of a dark night, came to his old friend Samuel at Ramah; to whom he told all his complaints, and with whom (for the better security of his person) he went to Naioth, which was *² a school or college of the prophets, and there dwelt.

to make David as odious as possible, that at one time or other he might fall into their hands. *Calmet's Commentary.*

† It is strange that Saul should speak to Jonathan to murder David, if he knew the friendship he had for him; and he could not well be ignorant of it, since (in 1 Sam. xviii. 3, 4.) he had made so public a declaration of it. But he imagined, perhaps, that his love to a father would overcome his love to a friend; and (taking an estimate from himself) might think it no mean incitement to his son, that David was going to deprive, not only the father of the present possession, but the son likewise, the right of succession to the throne of Israel. But whatever Saul's reasons might be for desiring Jonathan's assistance in so vile a fact, it is plain, that there was a peculiar Providence of God in his disclosing himself so freely on this head, since thereby David came to a right information of his danger. *Patrick's Commentary.*

* The speech which Josephus puts in Jonathan's mouth upon this occasion, is expressed in these terms:—"You have conceived, Sir, a terrible displeasure against this young man, and given orders for his death; but upon what provocation, or for what fault, great or little, I cannot apprehend. He is a person to whom we stand indebted for our safety, and the destruction of the Philistines; for vindicating the honour of our nation from the scandal of a forty days affront, in the challenge of a giant, whom not a creature, but this innocent youth, had a heart to encounter; a person who purchased my sister for his wife at your own price; and, in fine, a person entitled to your esteem and tenderness, both a brave man, and a member of your own family. Be pleased to consider then, what injury you do your own daughter in making her feel the mortification of being a widow, before she enjoys the blessing of being a mother. Be pleased to remember who it was that cured you of your dark melancholic

fits, and by that means laid an obligation upon the whole family; and who it was that (next under God) delivered us from our implacable enemies. These, Sir, are benefits never to be forgotten, without the infamy of the blackest ingratitude." *Jewish Antiq.* l. vi. c. 13.

*² When these schools of the prophets were at first instituted is no where indicated in Scripture: but as the first mention we find of them is in Samuel's time, we can hardly suppose, that they were much superior to it. It may be presumed therefore, that the sad degeneracy of the priesthood, at first occasioned the institution of these places, for the better education of those that were to succeed in the sacred ministry, whether as prophets or priests. According to the places that are specified in Scripture, (1 Sam. x. 5. 10. and xix. 20. 2 Kings ii. 5. iv. 38. and xxii. 14.) they were first erected in the cities of the Levites, which, for the more convenient instruction of the people, were dispersed up and down in the several tribes of Israel. In these places the prophets had convenient colleges built (whereof Naioth seems to be one) for their abode; and living in communities, had some one of distinguished note (very probably by Divine election) set over them to be their head or president. Here it was that they studied the law, and learned to expound the several precepts of it. Here it was, that, by previous exercise, they qualified themselves for the reception of the spirit of prophecy, whenever it should please God to send it upon them. Here it was, that they were instructed in the sacred art of psalmody, or (as the Scripture calls it, 1 Chronicles xxv. 1. 7.) in prophesying with harps, with psalteries, and cymbals: and hence it was, that when any blessings were to be promised, judgments denounced, or extraordinary events predicted, the messengers were generally chosen: so that these colleges were seminaries of Divine knowledge, and nurseries

It was not long before Saul had intelligence of his abode, and † sent a party of soldiers to apprehend him; but they, upon their arrival at the place, where they found Samuel teaching and instructing the younger prophets, were seized with a prophetic spirit, and returned not again. After these, he sent fresh messengers, and after them others again; but no sooner were they come within the verge of the place, but they all began to be affected in like manner. Saul at length, impatient of these delays, went himself; but as he drew near to Naioth, the Spirit of the Lord came upon him, so that he went along †² prophesying, until he came to the place where Samuel and David were, and there † stripping himself of his upper garments, he lay (as it were in an ecstasy) almost naked on the ground, all that day and the next night.

From 1 Sam.
i. to the end.

David took this opportunity to make a private visit to his friend Jonathan, with whom he expostulated his father's unkindness, which the other could no ways excuse, only he assured him of his best * offices; that he would make what discovery he could of his father's designs against him, and not fail to acquaint him with them. In the mean time he renewed the league of friendship that was between them, and directed him where to conceal himself for a day or two, until he could learn, whether it was proper

of that race of prophets which succeeded from Samuel to the time of Malachi. *Stillingfleet's Orig. Sacre. Wheatly on the Schools of the Prophets, and Jacob Abing, de repub. Heb.*

† Such was Saul's implacable hatred to David, that it had abolished, not only all respect and reverence to Samuel, (under whose protection David then was), but all regard likewise to the college of the prophets, which in those days had obtained the privilege of a sanctuary. *Patrick's Commentary, and Grotius, de Jure Belli et Pacis, l. 3. c. 11.*

†² This is a word of an extensive signification, and may denote sometimes such actions, motions, and distortions, as prophets, in their inspirations, are wont to express.

*Incerta qualis entheos cursus tulit,
Cum jam recepto Mænas insanit Deo.*

Sen. in Media.

which perhaps may be very justly applied to Saul upon this occasion. But the generality of interpreters, in this place, take prophecy to signify Saul's singing of psalms, or hymns of thanksgiving and praise, which even against his will he was compelled to do, to teach him the vanity of his designs against David, and that in them he fought against God himself. *Calmet's Commentary on 1 Sam. xviii. 10. and Pool's Annotations on xix. 23.*

† The words in our translation are,—“And he stript off his cloaths also, and lay down naked, all that day, and all that night,” 1 Sam. xix. 24. In which words, and some other portions of the like import, we are not to imagine that the persons there spoken of were entirely naked, but only that they were divested of some external habit or other, which, upon certain occasions, they might lay aside. For, whereas it is said of some prophets, Isa. xx. 2. and Mic. i. 8. that they went about naked, we can hardly think that they could be guilty of so much indecency, and especially by the express order of God, who had always testified his abhorrence of nudity, and enjoined his priests the use of several garments to cover their body, that thus they might be distinguished from the Pagan priests,

who were not ashamed to appear naked. The words in the original therefore, which we render *naked*, or *to be naked*, signify no more, than either to have part of the body uncovered, or to be without a gown or upper garment, which the Romans called *toga*, and (according to the custom of the Eastern people) was wont to be put on when they went abroad, or made any public appearance. And therefore it was some such vestment as this, or perhaps his military accoutrements which Saul, upon this occasion, put off; and that this was enough to denominate him naked, is manifest from what Aurelius Victor, speaking of those who were sent to Lucius Quintus Cincinnatus, to bring him to the senate to be made dictator, says, That they found him naked, plowing on the other side of the Tyber; whereas Livy, who relates the same story, observes, that he called to his wife Rucca for his gown or *toga*, that he might appear fit to keep them company. *Essay towards a New Translation.*

* The speech which Josephus puts in Jonathan's mouth, upon this occasion, is very tender and pathetic:—“That God, who fills and governs the universe, and knows the thoughts of my heart in the very conception of them; that God, says he, be witness to the faith that is vowed and promised betwixt us; and that I will never give over searching into, and sifting the private deliberations and purposes of my father, till I shall have discovered the bottom of his heart, and whether there be any secret rancour in his thoughts or not, that may work to your prejudice: And if I shall be able to make any thing out at last, whether it be for or against you, it shall be the first thing I do to give you information of it. The searcher of hearts will bear me witness that this is true, and that I have ever made it my earnest prayer to Almighty God, to bless and prosper you in your person and designs; and you may assure yourself, that he will be as gracious to you for the future as he has been hitherto, and lay all your enemies at your feet. In the mean while, pray be sure to keep these things in memory, and when I am gone, to take care of my poor children.” *Jewish Antiq. lib. vi. c. 14.*

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for him to appear or no; which was to signify to him by his shooting some arrows, in such a manner as they concluded on, and so mutually embracing, they parted.

† The feast of the new moon was now come, which Saul returned from Naioth to celebrate; but as he observed that * David's seat at the table had for two days been empty, he enquired of Jonathan, †² what was become of the Son of Jesse, as he called him in contempt. Jonathan told him that he had given him leave to go to an anniversary feast of his family at Bethlehem; whereupon Saul, suspecting very probably the reality of his answer, fell into a passion with his son, and upbraided him with his friendship for David, which (as he told him) would prove fatal to himself, and injurious to his succession; and therefore he commanded him to produce him; for resolved he was, that this rival of theirs should die. Jonathan was going to interpose something in vindication of his friend, and the unreasonableness of his father's indignation against him; which provoked his father to such a degree, that, forgetting all ties of paternal love, †³ he threw a javelin at him with an intent to kill him: But he avoided the blow and retired; and the next morning went into the fields, under pretence of shooting with his bow and arrows, to give David the signal. To him he communicated all that had passed between his father and him; that his father was implacable, and determined to destroy him, and therefore he advised him to escape for his life: And so having made new protestations to each other of perpetual friendship, they embraced and parted.

Ever after this David was banished from court, and lived in the nature of an out-law. The first place that he betook himself to was †⁴ Nob, where stood the tabernacle at that

† The Jewish months were lunar, and never began before the moon appeared above the horizon; for which purpose, there were certain persons placed upon the mountains, some time before the new moon was expected, to give notice by the sound of an horn when it first appeared, that so the news thereof might immediately be carried to Jerusalem. But lest there should be any mistake in this method of making their observation from this example of Saul's, it is supposed that they celebrated this festival for two days together. Whether the heathens had this rite from the Jews or no, it is certain, that other nations had feasts at the beginning of every month, and that, with the Romans, the Calends in particular were festival days consecrated to Juno, to whom sacrifices at this time were offered. *Calmet's Commentary.*

* That sitting at table was an ancients custom than either lying or leaning at meat, is obvious from this passage. The Egyptians, when they ate at Joseph's entertainment, sat at table, and so did the Hebrews. Homer always introduces his heroes in this posture; and that this was the known custom among the ancient people of Italy, Virgil, in these words, testifies;

Perpetuis soliti Patres considerare Mensis.

Eneid vii.

It is not to be dissembled however, that very early, and even in the time of Saul, the use of table beds, or beds to lie or lean upon at meals, had obtained among the Jews; for when the witch of Endor, with much entreaty prevailed with Saul to take a little refreshment, it is said, that "he arose from the earth, and sat upon the bed," 1 Sam. xxviii. 23. *Calmet's Commentary.*

†² It may seem a little strange, that Saul, who had so often endeavoured to kill David, and was now just

returned from an expedition undertaken against his life, should ever expect to see him at his table any more. But he might think, perhaps, that David was inclinable to overlook all that had passed, as the effect of his frenzy and melancholy; that now he had been prophesying at Naioth, he was returned to a sound mind, and become a new man; and that because, after the first javelin darted at him, David had ventured into his presence again, he might for the future be guilty of the like indiscretion. *Calmet's Commentary.*

†³ If it be asked, how came it to pass that Saul always had a javelin or spear in readiness (as on this, and other occasions) to execute his evil purposes? The answer is, that spears were the sceptres of those ages, which kings always carried in their hands. That they always carried the sceptres in their hands appears from Homer, and that these sceptres were spears is evident from Justin, (lib. xxiii. c. 3.) where, speaking of the first age of the Romans, (which Dr Patrick thinks was about the age of Saul) he tells us, that as yet, in these times, kings had spears as ensigns of royalty, which the Greeks called sceptres. The life of David, by the *Author of the Revelation Examined.*

†⁴ There is mention made of two cities of this name, one on the east, or further side, and the other on the west, or hither side of Jordan. The generality of interpreters will have the city here specified to be that which stood on the west side, and in the tribe of Benjamin. Though it is not reckoned among the number of the cities that were at first assigned to the priests, yet, that it afterwards became one of the sacerdotal towns, and especially (as we may imagine) when the tabernacle came to be moved thither, is evident from 1 Sam. xxii. 19, and Nehem. xi. 32.

time, and where || Ahimelech was high priest; but as he had no attendants, he pretended to Ahimelech, that he was sent by the king upon † a business of such dispatch that he had time neither to take arms, nor provision with him, and therefore obtained of the high priest * Goliath's sword, which had been deposited in the tabernacle, and some of the shew-bread, which the day before had been taken off from the golden table, and with these he proceeded to Gath, as not thinking himself safe in any part of Saul's dominions.

From 1 Sam.
i. to the end

He had not been long in Gath, however, before he was discovered, and the king informed of his being that great man of war in Israel who had so often defeated and destroyed the Philistines; so that, to get clear of this information, he was forced to counterfeited madness and an epilepsy, which he did so artfully, that by this means he evaded the suspicion of the king, and made his escape to †² Adullam, a town in the tribe of Judah, where his brethren and relations, together with many malecontents and men of desperate fortunes, met him, and made up a little army of about four hundred in number.

and some suppose it stood about four leagues from Gibeah. *Calmet's Commentary*, and *Wells's Geography of the Old Testament* vol. iii.

|| The words of our blessed Saviour, in Mark. ii. 25. are these,—“Have ye never read what David did, when he had need, and was an hungered, he, and they that were with him, how he went into the house of God, in the days of Abiathar the high priest, and did eat the shew-bread, and gave also to them that were with him?” Now there are two things which the author of this book of Samuel asserts, quite contrary to what our Saviour declares, viz. 1st, that David was alone, and no man with him, chap. xxi. 1. And 2dly, that Ahimelech was at that time high priest; whereas our Saviour affirms, both that David had company along with him, and that Abiathar was then in the pontificate. Now, 1st, that David had company with him, and that Ahimelech knew it, is evident from his words in the fourth verse; “there is no common bread in my hand, but there is hallowed bread, if the young men have kept themselves at least from women:” and therefore Ahimelech's meaning must be, that David had no guards to attend him, as it was usual for persons of his quality to have; or, at least those that were with him might be ordered to keep at a distance, and so Ahimelech (when he uttered these words) might not see them, though, when he came into a closer conference with David, David might inform him, what retinue he had brought, and consequently, that all the shew-bread was no more than what they wanted for their present support. 2dly, Though it be granted that the name of high priest, in its strictest sense, did not at this time belong to Abiathar, yet since it is generally agreed, that he was the Sagan, (as the Jews of latter days call him, who is the high priest's vicar) he might well enough (in a qualified sense) be called the high priest; especially considering his immediate succession to his father, and how short his father's continuance in the office was, after this interview with David. Nor can we see any great impropriety in saying that such a thing was done in the days of Abiathar the high priest, though done somewhat before he was invested with

that dignity; any more than in saying, that such a thing happened in the days of Henry VIII. which strictly came to pass some days before he began to reign. *Patrick's Commentary*.

† It must be owned, that David, in this pretence, did not speak direct truth, nor are we from hence to take an example for speaking lies; but one thing may be said in his excuse, that as he saw Doeg there, who he knew would inform Saul of what passed between him and Ahimelech, his pretence of business was on purpose to furnish the high priest (if he were called to an account) with a better apology for his reception of David, since he knew no other but that he came express from the king: And accordingly we may observe, that Ahimelech insists on that chiefly. It is a melancholy consideration, however, that the wickedness of the world should be such as to put even excellent men sometimes upon the necessity of lying to preserve their lives, which cannot be safe without it. *Patrick's Commentary*.

* It was an ancient custom, not only among the Jews, but the heathens likewise, to hang up the arms that were taken from their enemies in their temples; and in conformity hereunto, the sword wherewith he cut off Goliath's head David dedicated to the Lord, and delivered to the priest to be kept as a monument of his victory, and of the Israelites deliverance. And as it was customary to hang up arms in the temples, so when the occasions of the state required it, it was no unusual thing to take them down, and employ them in the public service; from whence came that saying of Seneca, “pro republicâ plerumque templâ nudant.” *Calmet's Commentary*.

†² It was a town in the tribe of Judah, of some considerable note in the days of Eusebius, and about ten miles from Eleutheropolis eastward, where there was a rock of the same name, in which was a cave, naturally strong and well fortified, to which David retreated; as indeed most of the mountains of Palestine were full of caverns, whither the country people generally betook themselves for safety in time of war. *Calmet's and Patrick's Commentaries*. *Wells's Geography of the Old Testament*, vol. ii.

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After his family had thus joined him, he could not but be apprehensive that the wrath of Saul would fall upon his aged parents; and therefore his next care was to provide them with a safe retreat; which he did by putting both himself and them under the protection of the king of Moab, who was then at enmity with Saul. And with his parents he thus continued, until the prophet Gad (who attended him) advised him to leave Moab, and to return into the land of Judah; which accordingly he did, and took up his station in the † forest of Hareth, where Abiathar the priest came to him, and, upon this sad occasion, brought along with him all the pontifical ornaments.

During David's short stay at Nob, Doeg, the king's principal herdsman, was there, and upon his return to court, gave Saul information of all that had passed between the high priest Ahimelech and David. Hereupon Saul sent for Ahimelech and the rest of the priests, and, having accused them of a conspiracy and traitorous practices against him, (* notwithstanding all the high priest could say in vindication of himself and his brethren) he commanded them to be put to death. His guards, who stood by and heard Ahimelech's defence, *² would not undertake so barbarous an office; but Doeg, who had been their accuser, at the king's command became their executioner, and, with his sacrilegious hand, slew no less than || eighty-five of them. Nor did Saul's bloody resentment stop here; *³ for, sending a party to Nob, he commanded them to kill man,

† Both St Jerom and Eusebius make mention of a place of this name in the tribe of Judah, lying westward of Jerusalem; of which Rabbi Solomon (upon the credit of some ancient tradition) says, that, being before dry, barren, and impassable, upon David's coming, it became fruitful and irriguous, and that in the xxxiii psalm (where he considers God as his shepherd, who would lead him into fruitful pastures, and under his protection, keep him safe in the most dangerous scenes) he alludes to this, "He shall feed me in a green pasture, and lead me forth by the waters of comfort." For surely it is not impossible but that this, which was before a barren desert, might now, by a singular blessing from God, upon the industry of David and his companions, become a green and well-watered pasture. *Wells's Geography of the Old Testament*, vol. iii. and *The History of David by the author of Revelation Examined*.

* The speech which Josephus draws up for the high priest, upon this occasion, is directed to Saul, and conceived in these words: "I did not receive David as your majesty's enemy, but as the faithfulest of your friends and officers, and (what is more) in the quality of your son too, and a relation in so tender a degree of affinity and alliance. For how should any body imagine that man to be your enemy, upon whom you have conferred so many honours? Or why should not I rather presume such a person, without any further enquiry, to be your singular friend?—He told me, that he was sent in haste by yourself upon earnest business; and if I had not supplied him with what he wanted, it would have reflected an indignity upon yourself rather than upon him. Wherefore, I hope, that the blame will not fall upon me, even though David should be found as culpable as you suspect him; unless an act of pure compassion and humanity, abstracted from the least thought, knowledge, or imagination of any evil intention, shall be understood to make me privy to a conspiracy; for the service I

did him was matter of respect to the king's son-in-law, and the king's military officer, not to the person or interest of David." *Jewish Antiq.* lib. vi. cap. 14.

*² In this they were to be commended; but much more praise they would have deserved, if they had offered up their petitions for these innocent people; if they had remonstrated to the king, that he was going to commit a thing that was contrary to all laws, both divine and human; and if (when they saw that neither their reasons nor petitions availed) they had looked upon this order as the effect of one of the king's distracted fits, and accordingly seized and secured him, until the priests had made their escape, and he returned to a better mind. For to stand wringing their hands while they saw so many innocent creatures murdered, and foreign soldiers made the instruments of the king's cruelty, was much the same thing as to betray all divine and human rights merely to please a tyrant. *Le Clerc's Commentary*. Vid. *Josephus's Jewish Antiq.* lib. vi. cap. 14. who has, upon this occasion, a curious descant about the abuse of power in kings, when once from a low, they come to be exalted to an high station in life.

|| The Septuagint, as well as the Syrian version, makes the number of priests slain by Doeg to be three hundred and five, and Josephus three hundred and eighty-five, which is a large variation from the Hebrew text. *Millar's History of the Church*.

*³ This party, as Josephus informs us, was commanded by Doeg, the vile informer and murderer, who taking some men as wicked as himself to his assistance, slew in all three hundred and eighty-five persons, and in addition to these, it is thought by some, that the Gibeonites, (upon whose account there was so sore a famine in the days of David) who might now be at Nob, in attendance upon the priests, were at this time slain. It is certain Saul was now become a mere tyrant, and against those poor people acted more cruelly than he did against the Amalekites,

woman, and child, and even every living creature; so that, of all the children of Ahimelech, none escaped but Abiathar, (as we said before) who came to David, and told him the dismal tidings of this massacre; which David could not but sadly condole, and in some measure look upon himself as the innocent occasion of it. However he gave Abiathar assurances of his protection, that he should share the same fate with him; and that, with his own life, he would shield him from all danger.

From 1 Sam.
i. to the end.

While Saul was imbruing his hands in the innocent blood of his subjects, David was employing his arms in the necessary defence of his country; for, hearing that the Philistines had made an incursion upon Keilah, a city of Judah, † he went and relieved the place, repulsed the enemy with a great loss of men, and took from them a considerable booty of cattle. Saul had soon intelligence of this action; and supposing that David would now fortify himself in this strong hold, he sent an army to invest it: But David, having consulted the Divine oracle upon this emergency, found that the inhabitants of the place would prove perfidious to him, and therefore he left them, and retired into a wood in the †² deserts of Ziph, whither Saul, for want of intelligence, could not pursue him; but his son Jonathan, having private notice sent him, went to him, and gave him all the comfort and encouragement that he could; assuring him, that his father's malice would never reach him; that he still hoped to see him king of Israel, and himself his second; and with these words, confirming the covenant of friendship between them, they embraced and parted.

The people of the wilderness were very officious in sending Saul intelligence where David was, and (if he would supply them with a sufficient force) undertook to betray him into his hands. But David, having taken notice of their intended treachery, retired farther into the desert of Maon, whither Saul pursued him, and pressed him so close, that there was but a valley between the two armies. David's army was so very small, that Saul was thinking of encompassing the mountain where he encamped, in order to prevent his escape; when news was brought him, that the Philistines had invaded the country on the other side; so that he was forced to drop his private resentment for the public weal, and divert his arms another way. But as soon as the Philistines were repulsed, he, with three thousand choice men, renewed his pursuit of David, who by this time was retired into the strong holds of †³ Engedi.

As Saul was on his march, he happened to turn into a cave to ease nature, where

some of whom he spared, even contrary to God's command; but in this case he let none escape, on purpose to deter others from giving the least shelter or assistance to David, and to incite them the rather to come and give him information, wherever his haunts or lurking places were. *Josephus's Antiq. lib. vi. c. 12.*

† We read of no embassy that the people of Keilah sent to David to desire his assistance, nor of any particular affection they had for him; and therefore we may suppose, that David undertook this expedition out of pure love to his countrymen, to let the world see how serviceable he could be to them, in case he was restored to his dignity again, and that (what ill treatment soever he should meet with from the hand of Saul,) nothing should provoke him to abandon his love for his country. *Le Clerc's Commentary.*

†² In Joshua, xv. 55. we read of a town of this name, where mention is likewise made of Carmel and Maon, and therefore it probably was adjacent to them. And here in the story of David, we find Carmel and Maon mentioned as adjoining to Ziph; so that it is not to

be doubted but that by the Ziph in the wilderness where David now concealed himself, we are to understand the Ziph which was in the neighbourhood of Carmel and Maon, in the southern part of the tribe of Judah, and (according to St Jerom) about eight miles eastward from Hebron. *Wells's Geogr. of the Old Testament, vol. iii.*

†³ En-gedi (now called Anguedi), in the days of St Jerom, was a large village, situate in the deserts, which lay upon the western coasts of the Salt or Dead Sea, not very far from the plains of Jericho. And as the country thereabouts abounded with mountains, and these mountains had plenty of vast caves in them, it was a very commodious place for David to retire to, and conceal himself in. Eusebius makes it famous for excellent balm, and Solomon in his Song for vineyards, which in all probability were planted by his father during his retirement in this place; and therefore so peculiarly celebrated by the son. *Calmet's Commentary, Wells's Geography of the Old Testament, vol. iii. and The History of King David, by the author of Revelation Examined.*

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David and some of his men lay hid. His men, when they saw the king entering alone, thought it a lucky opportunity that Providence had put in their hands, and accordingly instigated David to dispatch him: But David rejected the offer with abhorrence, * "God forbid that I should stretch forth my hand against the Lord's anointed;" and only (to show Saul how much he was in his power), went softly, and † cut off the skirt of his robe. When Saul was gone out of the cave, David called to him at a distance, and, shewing him the skirt of his raiment, declared his innocence in such tender terms, and with such submissive behaviour, that he made the king's heart relent. So that, with the utmost compunction, he acknowledged his guilt in thus persecuting the just; and, from the many escapes which God had vouchsafed David, concluding assuredly that he was to succeed in the kingdom, he conjured him, by all that was sacred, || not to destroy his family; and having obtained this promise, he returned home: But David, *2 not daring to trust to his fair words, still kept himself close in the fastnesses of the hills.

Much about this time †2 the prophet Samuel died, and was buried at Ramah, the place

* This one example of David's, under all the provocations he received from Saul, abundantly shews us, that the persons of kings are sacred and inviolable.

Regum timendorum in propriis greges,
Reges in ipsos imperium est Jovis.

Hor. Od. lib. 3. od. 1.

† If it be asked, how David could do this without Saul's perceiving it? the answer might be, That this possibly might be some upper loose garments which Saul might put off, and lay aside at some distance from him upon this occasion; and that as there were several rooms or particular cells in these large caverns, which might have secret passages from one another, Saul, at the mouth of one of these cells, might lay down his upper garment, which David perceiving, and knowing all the passages of the place, might go some secret way, and cut off some small part of it. Nor could the noise which David's motion might make be well heard by Saul, because it must have been drowned by a much greater noise which Saul's army, waiting for him at the mouth of the cave, may be supposed to make. *Pool's Annotations.*

|| But how did David absolve his promise, or keep his oath with Saul, when, in 2 Sam. xxi. 8. he slew so many of his sons? The reply that is usually made to this is,—That this promise or oath of David's could never be absolute or unconditional, because, upon supposition that any of Saul's family had become rebellious, they had nevertheless been obnoxious to the sword of justice; that though David could bind himself with his oath, yet he could not bind God, to whose will and pleasure all private obligations must be submitted; and what is more, that this execution was not done by David's order, but at the desire of the Gibeonites, to whom God had promised that satisfaction should be made for Saul's bloody endeavours to destroy them. *Patrick's Commentary, and Pool's Annotations.*

*2 It is an old saying, and a wise one, μὴ ἴσθαι ἀπιστῶν, "Remember not to be too credulous;" and the advice of the son of Sirach is this,—“Never trust

thine enemy; though he humble himself, yet take good heed, and beware of him.” *Eccclus. xii. 10, 11.*

†2 The Jews are of opinion, that Samuel died only four months before Saul: But by the generality of Christian chronologers, he is supposed to have died about two years before the death of that prince, and in the ninety-eighth year of his age, twenty of which had been spent in the government of Israel, (though Sir John Marsham will have it no more than sixteen,) before Saul's inauguration, after which he lived about eighteen. He was at first interred at Ramah; but, in the time of the Emperor Arcadius, his body was transported from Palestine to Constantinople, and (as St Jerom informs us) received both by the clergy and laity with a joy unspeakable, and honours almost infinite. He was, indeed, while he lived, an excellent governor, and through his whole administration, above vanity, corruption, or any private views. Those that attend to his life may observe, that he was modest without meanness, mild without weakness, firm without obstinacy, and severe without harshness; or, as the author of *Ecclesiasticus* has recorded his actions, and consecrated this eulogy to his memory, “Samuel, the prophet of the Lord, says he, beloved of the Lord, established a kingdom, and anointed princes over his people. By the law of the Lord he judged the congregation, and the Lord had respect unto Jacob. By his faithfulness he was found a true prophet, and by his word he was known to be faithful in vision. He called upon the mighty God, when his enemies pressed upon him on every side, when he offered the sucking lamb; and the Lord thundered from heaven, and with a great noise made his voice to be heard. He destroyed the rulers of the Syrians, and all the princes of the Philistines. Before his long sleep, he made protestations in the sight of the Lord and his Anointed, and after his death he prophesied, and shewed the king his end.” *Eccclus. xli. 13, &c.* But, besides the things that are recorded of this prophet in the first book of Samuel, there are some other passages concerning him in the first book of Chronicles; as, That he enriched the tabernacle with several spoils which he took from the enemies of Israel

of his habitation, in great solemnity, and † with the general lamentation of the people ; during which time David took the opportunity to remove from En-gedi, and to retire farther into the wilderness of Paran, not far from Maon, where he had been once before. From 1 Sam. i. to the end.

In the neighbourhood of this place there lived a wealthy man, whose name was Nabal, but himself was of a surly and morose disposition. While David abode in this wilderness the time before, he had taken great care to restrain his men from doing any injury to Nabal's flocks, and now, in the time of his sheep-shearing (which in these countries was always a season of great festivity and entertainment), he sent messengers to him, that, in consideration of the many civilities he had shewn him, he would be pleased to send some provisions for the support of his army. But Nabal received the messengers very rudely, and, with some opprobrious reflections upon David himself, sent them away empty ; which so exasperated David, that, in the heat of his resentment, he vowed to destroy all Nabal's family before next morning, and with this resolution he set forward : But Abigail, Nabal's wife, who was a very beautiful woman, and in temper the very reverse to her husband, being informed by her servant of what had passed, took this expedient to divert his ire :

She ordered her servants immediately to pack up two hundred loaves of bread, || two bottles of wine, five sheep ready dressed, five measures of parched corn, an hundred clusters of raisins, and two hundred cakes of figs ; and with this present she made haste to meet David. David was marching with all speed to put in execution his rash vow ; but Abigail, when she met him, approached him with that respect, and addressed him †² in such moving language, that she soon disarmed him of his rage, and stopped the effects of his indignation, so that they both parted with mutual satisfaction ; he, for being thus prevented from shedding of blood, and she, for having thus happily succeeded in her embassy.

When she got home, she found her husband rioting and drinking ; so that she deferred telling him of what had passed, until he was a little soberer the next morning. But when he came to understand the danger he had been in, he was so terrified at the

during his administration, chap. xxvi. 28. That he assisted in regulating the distribution of the Levites, which David afterwards prescribed for the service of the temple, chap. ix. 22. And, lastly, that he wrote the history of David, in conjunction with the prophets Nathan and Gad. But as he was dead before David came to the throne, this can be meant only of the beginning of that history, which by the other two prophets might be continued and concluded. There is great probability, indeed, that he composed the twenty-four first chapters of the first book of Samuel, which contains the beginning of David's life, and several historical facts wherein he himself had a large share ; but as for the latter part of it, it was impossible for him to write it, because in the beginning of the xxvth chapter there is mention made of his death.

† When they saw the disorders of Saul's reign, they had great reason to lament their loss of Samuel, and their sin, in rejecting so great a prophet and so good a magistrate. *Millar's History of the Church.*

|| It must be obvious to every reader, that two bottles of wine would bear no proportion to the other parts of the present, nor answer the exigencies which David's army might be in, if they be understood of such bottles as are now commonly in use with us ; but, in these eastern countries, they used to carry and keep their wine and water in leathern bags, made

on purpose to hold liquid things, which vessels they called, or (at least) we translate them, *bottles*. Such were the bottles which the Gibeonites brought to Joshua's camp, which they said were worn out, and torn in their long pretended journey, Josh. ix. 13. And of such as those it is not unlikely that our Saviour speaks, Matth. ix. 17. where, in the marginal note of our old bible, bottles are explained by bags of leather, two skins or borachios, wherein wine was carried on asses or camels : And that two such vessels as these might hold a quantity of wine proportionate to the rest of the present which Abigail carried with her, needs not to be disputed. *Howell's History in the Notes.*

†² The speech which the sacred historian puts in Abigail's mouth, upon this occasion, is certainly an artful piece of eloquence, full of fine turns and insinuations ; nor is that of Josephus. especially in the conclusion, much amiss :—" Be pleased, Sir, I beseech you, to accept of the good-will of your poor servant in these small presents, and, upon my humble request, to pass over the offence of my husband, who has so justly incurred your displeasure ; for there is nothing so well becoming the character of a person, whom Providence designs for a crown, as clemency and compassion." *Jewish Antiquities*, lib. vi. c. 14.

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thoughts of it, that || he turned quite stupid, and, in the space of ten days, died : whereupon David sent for his wife, and married her, as he did likewise another woman, whose name was Ahinoam, a Jezreelite ; for his first wife, who was Saul's daughter, by her father's command, † was at this time given to another.

The Ziphites (as we said before) were always forward to give Saul information where David and his men were concealed ; and therefore, understanding from them that he was somewhere about the mountain Hachilah †², he took three thousand men, and went in quest of him. David had intelligence where Saul's army lay encamped ; and therefore going, first of all privately himself, to reconnoitre it, he †³ took with him at night his nephew Abishai, and, entering the camp, found Saul, and Abner, and all the rest of the host, fast asleep. Abishai would have gladly made use of this opportunity to dispatch the king, but David would by no means permit him, for the same reasons that he had saved his life in the cave ; only the * spear and cruise of water that were at his bed's head, he bid him bring with him that he might shew the king how much his life had been at his mercy ; and accordingly, when they got at a convenient distance, David, with a loud voice, called unto Abner, and, in an †⁴ ironical manner, upbraided

|| The words in the original are, " He became a stone ;" but our translation has wisely supplied the particle *as*, which should always be done, when the Scripture affirms something of another that is not absolutely of the same nature. We may observe, however, that this manner of expression is very common among profane authors. Thus Ovid brings in Ariadne expressing her grief and astonishment at the loss of Theseus, who had left her in the island Dia :

Aut mare prospiciens in Saxo frigida sedi,

Quamque lapis sedes, tam lapis ipsa fui.

The like expression is used of Hecuba, when she saw the dead body of her son Polydorus :

— duroque simillima Saxo

Torpet. — — —

But in the case of Niobe, who is said to be turned into a statue of stone, Cicero, in his Tusculan Questions, observes,—that this fable only represents her perpetual silence in mourning ; and accordingly Josephus tells us of Nabal, that when his wife told him of the danger he had escaped, he was struck with such an astonishment, that he fell into a dead numbness all over his body, of which he soon died. *Le Clerc's* Comment. and Dissert. de Statuâ Salis.

† The reason of Saul's putting this indignity upon David, was to extinguish, as far as he could, all relation and kindred, and to cut off his hopes and pretences to the crown upon that account ; but, as the Jewish doctors are of opinion, that this Phalti, to whom she was given, was a very pious man, and would never approach her, because she was another man's wife, and as David had never been divorced from her, he received her again when he came to the throne. *Pool's* Annotations, and *Calmet's* Comment.

†² The inconstancy, falseness, and implacable rage of this prince, is really inconceivable. Not long ago he was obliged to David for his life, and acknowledged his error, and made David swear, that he would be kind and merciful to his posterity ; and yet now he openly declares himself again his enemy, and goes in pursuit of him to kill him. *Patrick's* Commentary.

†³ This may seem a bold and strange attempt, for

two persons to go into the midst of an army of three thousand chosen men ; but, in answer to this, many things may be considered : as that, according to the accounts of many credible historians, several gallant men have attempted things of no less danger and difficulty than this was ; that David had all along assurance given him, that God would preserve him in all dangers to succeed in the kingdom ; and that at this time he might have a particular impulse and incitement from God to go upon this enterprise, and might possibly be informed by him, that he had cast them into a deep sleep, that he might give him this second opportunity of manifesting to Saul his innocence, and the justness of his cause. Not to say, that as secrecy, at this time, was the great point, David might think himself safer, in this respect, with one single companion than with more. *Pool's* Annotations, and *The Life of King David*.

* That it was customary for warriors, when they laid them down to rest, to have their arms placed in order by them, is evident from what Silius Italicus tells us of Mago, Hannibal's brother.

— Nec degener ille

Belligeri ritus taurino membra jacebat

Effultus tergo, et mulcebat tristia Somno.

Haud procul Hasta viri terrâ defixa propinquâ

Et dira è summâ pendebat cupide cassis

Et clypeus loricaque, et ensis, et arcus,

Et telum Balearè simul tellure quiescunt.

Lib. vii.

But, long before Silius, Homer describes the Thracians sleeping in this manner in their tents :

Οἱ δ' ἔδον καμάτω ἀδδμήκτες, ἔντεα δὲ σφιν

Καλὰ παρ' αὐτοῖσιν χθονὶ κέκλιτο εὖ κατὰ κόσμον Il. 10.

.....

Ῥῆσος δ' ἐν μέσσω εὐδῇ ———

†⁴ This speech which David makes to Abner, according to Josephus, is to this effect :—" Are not you a fit man to be a prince's favourite, a general of his army, to take upon you the guard of his royal person, and, under all these honourable obligations, to

him with his neglect of preserving the king's life, since his spear, and the cruise of water, that were so near his bed's head, were so easily taken from him; and when Saul, upon hearing his voice, came out of the camp and spake to him, he expostulated with him, much in the same manner as he did after his escape from the cave, with this additional complaint,—that, by thus expelling him from his own country, he forced him to converse with infidels, and (as much as in him lay) to embrace their religion. Whereupon Saul, accusing himself of cruelty, and applauding David's generosity, confessed his guilt, and promised, for the future, never to make any farther attempts upon his life.

But notwithstanding these specious declarations, David, who knew the instability of Saul's temper, and how impossible it was for him to live in safety, while he continued in his dominions, determined at last to go over to the Philistines; and having obtained from † Achish, king of Gath, a safe conduct for himself and his retinue, he for some time lived in the royal city; but not liking his accommodation here so well, as he grew in favour with the king ever more and more, he obtained of him at last to have the †² town of Ziklag assigned for his habitation; and as soon as he was settled here, several of Saul's best officers and soldiers came over to him. David at first had some suspicion of them; but having, for some time, made trial of their fidelity, he received them into his service, and gave them commands: And with this accession to his army, he was enabled to make several excursions against the || Amalekites, and other nations, in which he was accustomed to kill all, that none might carry information, and at the same time, †³ by certain imbiguous expressions, made the king believe, that the booty

lie dozing and stretching yourself at ease when your master's life is in danger? Can you tell me what is become of the king's lance, and the pitcher of water that were this night taken by the enemy out of his tent, and from his very bed-side, and you, in the mean time, all snoring about him, without knowing any thing of the matter? Whether this was neglect or treachery it is the same thing; you certainly deserve to lose your head for it." *Jewish Antiq.* lib. vi. c. 14.

† Whether this was the same Achish mentioned 1 Sam. xxi. 10. with whom David took shelter at his first flight from Saul, or some successor of the same name, is a matter of some conjecture: His being called Achish, the son of Maach, seems to imply that he was a different person, because, in the nature of things, these words can have no use but only to distinguish this Achish from another of the same name. But whoever he was, it is highly probable that he either had invited David to come thither for his security, or that David had sent before hand ambassadors to treat with him, and to obtain his royal promise of protection. And this we are the rather induced to believe, because both found their advantage by this alliance: David secured himself against the persecutions of Saul; and Achish, knowing David's valour, and the number of troops which came along with him, thought he should give a powerful diversion to the forces of Israel, if he could at this time attach David to his interest. But whether David did well or ill in either suing for, or accepting of the protection of this foreign king, is a point that we shall have occasion to discuss hereafter. *Patrick's* and *Calmet's* Commentaries, and *The Life of King David*.

†² Ziklag was situate in the extreme parts of the tribe of Judah southwards, not far from Hormah,

where the Israelites received a defeat while they sojourned in the wilderness. In the division of the land of Canaan, it was first given to the tribe of Judah, Josh. xv. 31. and afterwards to that of Simeon, Josh. xix. 5. but the Philistines seem all along to have kept possession, so that it never came into the hands of either tribe, until, by the gift of Achish, it became the peculiar inheritance of David and his successors. Why David desired of Achish the liberty to retire to this place, was to avoid the envy which the number of his attendants might possibly occasion; to secure his people from the infection of idolatry; to enjoy the free exercise of his own religion; and to gain an opportunity of enterprising something against the enemies of God, without the knowledge or observation of the Philistines. *Calmet's* Commentary, and *Pool's* Annotations.

|| In 1 Sam. xv. 7. we read, that "Saul smote the Amalekites, and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword;" and yet we find here David making frequent incursions upon the Amalekites; and therefore the meaning of the former passage must be, that Saul destroyed as many of them as fell into his hands; for several of them might make their escape from Saul into the deserts that lay towards Arabia-Felix, and upon his retreat return and repossess their old habitation. *Le Clerc's* Commentary.

†³ The words wherein David answered this question of Achish, "Whither have you made a road to-day?" are these, "Against the south of Judah, and against the south of the Jerahmeelites, and against the south of the Kenites," 1 Sam. xxvii. 10. By which nations David, in reality, meant the Geshurites and the Gezerites, who were both of them relicts of the Canaanites, whom God ordered to be extirpated, and who did, in truth, live to the south of

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he brought back with him, was taken from the Israelites, which was no unpleasant news.

In short, to such a degree of confidence was he grown with Achish, that he proposed taking him along with him to the war, which the Philistines had at this time declared against Saul; but some of the chief men about him declaring against it, as being apprehensive, that in the day of battle he might possibly turn against them, prevailed with the king to dismiss him. This was an agreeable turn to David; yet he so far dissembled the matter, that the king (to oblige his nobles) was forced to be very pressing and importunate with him to return to Ziklag; which accordingly he did, and, in his march thither, was joined by several of the tribe of Manasseh (as those of Gad and Benjamin had done before) to a considerable augmentation of his forces. And well it so happened; for upon his return to Ziklag, he found that the Amalekites had burnt and pillaged the place, † and carried away his two wives, and all the people that were therein; and (what was no small accession to this misfortune) his soldiers mutinied against him, as if he had been †² the occasion of it. David, however, marching away immediately, and having gained intelligence which way the enemy took, soon came up with them, fell upon them, and cut them to pieces; and not only recovered all the persons and the booty which they had taken, but several rich spoils likewise, that they had robbed others of in this expedition, whereof he made presents to his friends †³.

In the mean time, the Philistine army lay at †⁴ Shunem, and Saul and his forces were encamped in Mount Gilboa, from whence having a prospect of the enemy's strength, †⁵ his courage failed him, when he saw how much more numerous the Philistines were, and found, at the same time, that God, in this pressing juncture, would not be consulted by him, nor give him any instructions what to do. He had, some time before, banished all the wizards, and such as dealt with familiar spirits, out of the nation; but being now in the utmost perplexity, †⁶ he was resolved to consult some one of this pro-

Judah; but Achish understood him in a quite contrary sense, viz. that he had fallen upon his own countrymen. So that since the formality of a lie consists in our imposing upon those with whom we converse, we cannot but allow, that though David's answer may not be called a downright lie, yet it is an equivocation with an intent to deceive, badly comporting with that honesty and simplicity which became David, both as a prince and professor of the true religion, wherein he is no way to be excused, and much less to be imitated. *Pool's Annotations.*

† It may seem a little strange, that the Amalekites, who had so often been cut to pieces by David, should not, upon their success, slay, rather than carry away the people, which they found in Ziklag: But this may be imputed either to their covetousness, who might keep them for sale, and to make money of them as captives; or to their cruelty, who might reserve them for more lingering and repeated torments; or perhaps for the gratification of their brutal lusts; though principally it is to be ascribed to God's overruling Providence, who restrained, and set bounds to their rage. *Pool's Annotations.*

†² This he might seem to be in relinquishing his own country, and coming to Ziklag; in provoking the Amalekites, by the slaughter of all that came in his way; and in going with Achish to war, while he left the place, where their wives and children were unguarded. *Pool's Annotations.*

†³ His friends were chiefly those of his own tribe;

but besides these, we find he sent to others, viz. to the inhabitants of the city of Bethel, which belonged to the tribe of Ephraim; and this he did, not only in acknowledgment of the shelter and support which he had received from them in his banishment, but in prospect of their future favour and interest in case there should happen a vacancy in the throne. *Le Clerc's* and *Patrick's Commentaries.*

†⁴ Shunem was a city in the borders of the tribe of Issachar, about five miles to the south of Mount Hermon, according to St Jerom and Eusebius; who tells us likewise, that Gilboa was a ridge of mountains, six miles distance from Scythopolis, anciently called Bethsham; and that Endor was a town in the valley of Jezreel, at the foot of Mount Gilboa. *Wells's Geography of the Old Testament*, and *Le Clerc's Commentary.*

†⁵ The Philistines must have had, on this occasion, several hired forces, otherwise Saul had no reason to have been afraid of them, because the small tract which the Philistines inhabited could not possibly supply them with an army any thing equal to the Hebrews, who, in some of their wars, have carried to the field some hundred thousands of men. *Le Clerc's Commentary.*

†⁶ A strange infatuation this of Saul! He had banished all wizards and sorcerers out of his kingdom, as a dangerous sort of people, who made profession of a wicked and unwarrantable art; and yet he here enquires after one, and puts his whole confidence in

fession, in order to know what the fate of this war would be. At Endor, about three leagues from Mount Gilboa, he was told there lived a * witch or sorceress; and therefore disguising himself, and taking but two servants with him, that he might not be suspected, he came to the woman *² by night, and desired of her *³ to raise up the ghost of Samuel.

From 1 Sam.
i. to the end

Whether it was the ghost of Samuel which God, upon this occasion, permitted to appear, or some evil spirit whom the witch, by her enchantments, might raise up; but so it was, that, from this spectre, † the woman learnt that it was Saul who had employed her; and Saul, when he saw it, bowed his face to the ground. The apparition spake first, and, demanding the reason, *⁴ why he had raised him from the dead, was answered by Saul, that the Philistines, with a powerful army, had invaded him, and, in his distress, God had forsaken him, and would give no answer †² which way soever he consulted him: To whom the spirit replied, that, for his disobedience, in not destroying the Amalekites, God had taken away the kingdom from his family, and given it to David; and as to the fate of the war, the Philistines †³ the next day should rout his army, and he and his sons fall in the battle.

what he had so wisely exploded before; as if a witch, with her incantations and other diabolical arts, was capable of allaying the uneasiness of his mind, or securing him from the apprehensions of danger. It may be observed, however, that he mentions a woman rather than a man to be consulted upon this occasion, because he might imagine, that the weaker sex might more easily be deceived by evil spirits, and were generally more addicted to these unlawful practices. *Calmet's and Patrick's Commentaries.*

* The Septuagint have called her, “a woman that speaks from her belly, or stomach,” as most magicians affected to do; and some modern authors have informed us, that there were women who had a demon, which spake articulately from the lower part of their stomachs, in a very loud, though hoarse tone:

Umbræ cum saganâ resonarent triste et acutum.

Hor. Sat. viii. lib. 1.

*⁴ They could not go the direct way; for then they must have passed through the enemies camp; and therefore they took a compass, and travelled by night, that they might not be discovered; besides that the night was the properest time to consult those that pretended to magical incantations, it being a common opinion among the Greeks, as perhaps now it might be among the Hebrews, that none of the terrestrial demons did appear in the day-time. *Patrick's Commentary.*

*³ It was a common pretence of magicians, that they could raise up ghosts from below, or make dead persons appear to declare unto them future events.

— Cruor in fossam effusus, ut inde

Manes elicerent, animas responsa daturas.

Hor. Sat. viii. lib. i.

And therefore Saul addresses the woman; as if he believed her abilities in that way. This, however, shews, not only the antiquity of necromancy, but the prevailing opinion then, that the soul, after the death of the body, did survive; otherwise it would have been impertinent for Saul to desire the woman to raise up Samuel: Which makes it the greater wonder, that we have no where in the Old Testament a positive declaration of the soul's immortality. *Calmet's and*

Le Clerc's Commentaries.

† How the woman came to know it to be Samuel, we may thus imagine. She saw an apparition she did not expect; she knew the prophet; she knew the veneration which Saul had for him; she knew that prophets were only sent to kings; and she knew withal, that her art, whatever it was, had never before that time exhibited a person of that figure to her; and from hence she concluded, that the apparition must needs be Samuel, and the person who came to consult her, in all probability, was Saul. *The history of the Life of King David.*

*⁴ The words of Samuel are, “Why hast thou disquieted me, and brought me up?” Which seem to imply, that Samuel was raised up by the force of this woman's incantments: But as it is not in the power of witches to disturb the rest of good men, and bring them into the world when they please, it is much more rational to think, that the Scripture here expresses itself in a manner suitable to the prejudice of the vulgar, among whom it was a common notion, that these incantations gave trouble to the souls that were at rest: For which reason, they were either to be appeased by offerings, or constrained by the force of incantments; for so the tragedian has informed us,

Carmenque magicum volvit, et rapido minax

Decantat ore, quicquid aut placat leves

Aut cogit umbras.

Seneca in Œdip.

†³ The sacred historian has reckoned up three several ways of enquiring of God, viz. by dreams, by urim, and by prophets; and it may not be amiss to observe, that there were the same methods of consulting their gods among the Gentiles; as it appears by what Achilles says in the council of the Greeks, when met together to consider about the plague which Apollo sent among them:

‘Ἄλλ’ ἄγε δὴ τινα μάντιν ἐρεῖμεν, ἣ ἰερῆα,

ἢ καὶ ὄνειροπόλον, καὶ γὰρ τ’ ὄναρ ἐκ Διὸς ἔστιν.

†³ The phrase wherein Samuel expresses himself is this,—“To-morrow shalt thou and thy sons be with

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Saul had no sooner heard his doom but he fainted away; and, as he had eaten nothing for some considerable time, * the woman and his servants with much ado prevailed with him to take some refreshment; which when he had done, he went away, and marched all night, that he might come early enough to the camp next morning.

The next morning the two armies met and engaged, but the Israelites were forced to give way, and maintained a running fight until they came to Mount Gilboa; where, gaining the advantage of the ground, they attempted to rally again, but with as little success as before. Saul and his sons did all that was possible for brave men to do; but the Philistines aiming wholly at them, in a short time overpowered them with numbers, † so that Jonathan, and two others of his brothers, Abinadab and Malchishua, were killed upon the spot, and the whole army put in confusion.

Saul defended himself as well as man could do; but the small party that remained with him being entirely broken, and the ‡² enemies archers pressing hard upon him, he found himself so weakened with his wounds and loss of blood, that, for fear of falling into their hands and being insulted, he fell upon his own sword, and so died. He had requested of his armour-bearer before this to dispatch him; but his armour-bearer was startled at the proposal, and refused to do it: However, when he saw his master dead, †³ he desperately followed his example, and, in the same manner, put an end to his life.

me;" where the word *to-morrow* (as some interpreters imagine) is not to be taken in a strict sense, because (as they conceive) this battle was not fought till some time after; but in the passage before us there seems to be no reason why *to-morrow* should not be taken literally; for as Endor was at no great distance from the Israelites camp, Saul might go that night, consult the witch, stay and eat with her, and get back to the camp before it was light. The next day the battle begins; Saul is vanquished; and, seeing his army routed, despairs and stabs himself. All this might very well be done in the space of twelve or fourteen hours; and therefore I see no occasion why we should depart from the plain signification of the words. *Calmet's Commentary.*

* Josephus seems to be very warm in his commendation of this woman's generosity to Saul. "She received him, treated him, and relieved him; and all this so cheerfully and so frankly, that she gave him all she had without any prospect of reward; for she knew that he was doomed to die:—and, what is more, this she did for the very man whose prohibition had been her ruin." But he rashly supposes, that, in the words of the Sacred History, the narration is accurate, and defective in no one circumstance; whereas, for any thing we know, this woman was far from being poor. Saul had amply rewarded her for raising up Samuel, and his attendants might give her a round price for her lamb. And though it must be owned, that her address to the king is tender and respectful enough; yet, whether it proceeded from fear or affection, may admit of some debate. *Le Clerc's Commentary.*

† It was certainly no small grief to David to hear of Jonathan's death, and a trial it might be of his patience and resignation to the Divine will; but still there seems to be a direction of Providence in suffering him to be slain, that David might more easily come to the throne. For though Jonathan, no doubt, would have made a voluntary dedication of it, yet, as he was the people's great favourite, some there might

possibly be who would not allow of the dedition, and so a civil war might have arose concerning the successor, which, by his dying in this manner, was prevented. *Pool's Annotations.*

‡² There is no mention of archers in any of the Philistine armies or battles before this; in which they are said to have pressed hard upon Saul, as doubtless they were of great advantage to the Philistines in making their attack, 1st, Because an assault with this kind of weapon was new and surprising, and therefore generally successful; and, 2dly, Because the arrows, destroying the Israelites at a distance, before they came to close fight, threw them naturally into terror and confusion. And for this reason some think, that, when David came to the throne, he taught the Israelites the use of the bow (as we read 2 Sam. i. 18.), that they might not be inferior to the Philistines, nor fall into the like disaster that Saul had done; and for this reason it certainly was, that, when he had made a peace with the Philistines, he took some of their archers (who in the following books are frequently mentioned under the name of Cherethites) to be his body-guard. *Patrick's Commentary, and The History of the Life of King David.*

‡³ The learned and ingenious author of *The Historical Account of the Life of King David*, seems to make it evident, that Saul and his armour-bearer died by the same sword, viz. that which belonged to the armour-bearer. "Now it is an established tradition of the Jewish church, says he, that this armour bearer was Doeg the Edomite, who, by Saul's command, slew such a number of priests in one day, 1 Sam. xxii. 19.; and if so, then Saul and his executioner fell both by the same weapon wherewith they had before massacred the servants of the Lord: even as Brutus and Cassius killed themselves with the same sword with which they treacherously murdered Cæsar:—I say treacherously murdered, because they lay in his bosom at the same time that they meditated his death." vol. i.

The next day, when the Philistines came to take a view of the field of battle, finding the bodies of Saul and his sons among the slain, they stripped them of their armour, cut off their heads, and sent expresses to every place of their victory. * Their armour they sent to the temple of Ashtaroth, their heads they fixed up in the temple of Dagon, and their bodies they hung upon gibbets against the walls of Bethshan. But the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead, hearing of this indignity, and retaining a grateful sense of the services Saul had done them, sent a party of their best soldiers by night, who took down their bodies, and brought them away to Jabesh, where the people first † burnt the remains of their flesh; next honourably interred their bones and ashes in a grove that was near their city; and then, for the space of †² seven days, fasted, and made great lamentation for them.

From 1. Sam.
i. to the end

THE OBJECTION.

“**THOUGH** the first book of Samuel (whoever its author was) contains a great variety of history, and is pregnant with many remarkable transactions; yet whoever takes an accurate survey of them, will find them so loaded with absurdities and contradictions, as utterly destroy their credibility. For whatever motives the Israelites might have for carrying the ark along with them to the war, if the real presence of God went along with it, we can hardly conceive how the Philistines could possibly take it captive; and if there was no Divine power attending it, how it came to work those wonders wherever it abode, and to inflict upon its enemies such sore punishments for their detention of it.

Its enemies indeed, (upon this supposition) had cause enough to endeavour to get rid of it; but it is a matter of some admiration, why the Israelites, when they had it returned to them, did not carry it directly to Shiloh, and there reposit it in the tabernacle, its proper habitation. It looks indeed, as if they were afraid of it, and willing to shift it from one to another, after it had made such havoc among the poor people of Bethshemesh, as to destroy above fifty thousand of them, an incredible number! merely

* We have taken notice before, that it was an ancient custom among sundry nations, to hang up the arms, and other spoils taken from the enemy, in the temples of their gods, as trophies and monuments of their victory; and need only remark here, that the same custom prevailed among the Greeks and Romans, as appears from this passage of Virgil.

Multaque præterea sacris in postibus arma,
Captivi pendent currus, curvæque secures,
Et cristæ capitum, et portarum ingentia claustra
Spiculaque, clypeique, ereptaque rostra carinis.

Æneid vii.

† It is certain that the usage among the Hebrews was not to burn, but to embalm the bodies of their dead with aromatic spices; but in this case the people of Jabesh might act otherwise, either because the bodies of Saul and his sons were by this time so dried or corrupted, that they were not fit to be embalmed; or because they were apprehensive, that if they should embalm them, and so bury them, the people of Bethshan might at one time or other come and dig them up, and fix them against their walls again; and there-

fore the Jabeshites thought it advisable to recede from their common practice, and, for the greater security, to imitate the heathens in this particular.

Κλαίοντες δ' ἐτάροισιν ἐνὶ οἴκῳ λευκὰ
ἄλλεγον ἐς χερσίνην φιάλην.

Hom. Il. xxiii.

Calmet's and Le Clerc's Commentaries.

†² It seems a little strange, that we nowhere read of any general mourning that was made for Saul and his sons who died in battle; but the national troubles which followed upon his death, might perhaps be an obstruction to this. David and his men mourned but one day for Saul: And therefore, when it is said of the Jabeshites, that they fasted seven days, their fasting must not be understood in a strict sense, as if they ate nothing all this time, but in a more large and general signification, as it is used both in sacred and profane writers, viz. that they lived very abstemiously, ate little, and that seldom, and that but mean food, and instead of wine drank water only; *Calmet's Commentary*, and *Pool's Annotations*.

A. M. 2888, for presuming to peep into it, though they had received it with the greatest respect &c. or 4301. and congratulations but just before.

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or 1110.

The Israelites, it must be owned, were, upon several accounts, a very rebellious people; but it is difficult to conceive where their great iniquity lay in desiring a king, as other nations had; especially since Samuel's sons ruled so badly, and God, in his great wisdom, had pre-ordained that, when they came into the promised land, their government should be regal. This king, we understand, was to be elected by God; but it looks a little envious, and as if he had given them a king in his wrath, to make choice of one out of the meanest of all the tribes, and for no other good qualification, that we read of, but merely the tallness of his stature. The state and dignity, however, to which he was advanced, was not so great, since, after his election, we find him (*a*) acting in the capacity of a shepherd; nor was his enjoyment of the throne attended with much felicity, since God turned his enemy so soon, and rejected him for not destroying the whole race of the Amalekites.

(*b*) God's command indeed, to have every thing belonging to Amalek, men and women, infants and sucklings, oxen and sheep, camels and asses, utterly destroyed, for an offence done four hundred years before, and to prosecute revenge upon a people, whose only crime was, their being the unhappy descendants of those who had originally done it; seems to bear as hard upon the justice and goodness of God, as his sending Samuel to Bethlehem to anoint David king, and bidding him, at the same time, pretend that he came only to offer a sacrifice, reflects upon his truth and veracity.

It may very well be questioned, however, by what authority Samuel could offer any sacrifice (since he was not of the sacerdotal order) on such altars as were prohibited, and in such places as were not appointed for these offices, to the manifest violation of God's laws: And much more may it be wondered at, that a man of his pacific character should fall upon a poor captive king, and cut him in pieces with his own hands, even in the presence of his own sovereign, who, out of his clemency, had thought proper to save him; and so set himself above the jurisdiction of God's anointed, and in the face of his authority.

What Saul's particular distemper was, it is no easy matter to determine; but since the Scripture expresses it by (*c*) "an evil spirit from the Lord," it is difficult to conceive how David, by playing upon his harp, (even (*d*) though he might sing to it likewise) could ever be able to dispossess him. The power of music is confessedly great; and yet we find it had little or no effect upon Saul, since he still continued crazed and delirious. For to what other cause can we impute his (*e*) strange forgetfulness of David, who had been so frequently in his presence, and (*f*) found such favour in his sight; (*g*) whose attendance he had requested of his father, and whose service in curing his malady, he had requited with the honourable post of his armour-bearer; with whom (*h*) he had a conference but just before, and seen him both put on and off his armour; and, after all this, could any but a madman enquire of his general (who knew it seems as little as his master) (*i*) whose son this stripling was?

Whether David himself was really delirious, or only pretended to be so when he came to the court of Achish, is a question that admits of some debate; but it seems as if he were not much better, when he made not only Gath, which was the capital of the Philistines, and the city where Goliath had dwelt, the place of his refuge, but (as if he meant on purpose to provoke the inhabitants thereof) took the sword of the champion along with him, whom he had so lately slain. Well was it for him, if, to secure him from harm, God deprived him of his senses at this juncture; for to extricate himself from a predicament he had voluntarily run into, by personating the madman, or pretending to be a

(*a*) 1 Sam. xi. 5.

(*b*) *Christianity as old as the Creation*, p. 278.

(*c*) 1 Sam. xvi. 14.

(*d*) *Josephus's Jewish Antiq.* lib. vi. cap. 9.

(*e*) 1 Sam. xvii. 55.

(*f*) *Ibid.* xvi. 22.

(*g*) *Ibid.* xvi. 21.

(*h*) *Ibid.* xvii. 38, 39.

(*i*) *Ibid.* ver. 56.

fool, was but a mean trick ; as his opening an asylum afterwards, not for his own relations only, but for every one that was in debt, or distress, or discontent with the government, was certainly an unjust artifice. From 1 Sam. i. to the end.

Saul certainly was his avowed enemy, and pursued him with implacable malice ; and therefore it would have been much more excusable in him, if he had eased himself of this adversary, when Providence threw opportunities in his way, than to meditate the murder of Nabal and his family, (a) merely because he would not pay contributions to him and his gang of desperadoes : And though reservedness to an enemy may be very commendable, yet his deep dissimulation to Achish, when there was no occasion for it ; his entering into league with the enemy of his country, joining his forces, and going to war with him, promising him great services, if once they came to action, and when he was desired to withdraw, parting with the utmost reluctance, are instances of such a base and perfidious spirit, as a brave man should rather chuse to die than be guilty of.

(b) In a word, however, David may be called in Scripture, “ the man after God’s own heart,” yet in these, and several other instances, he is found sadly prevaricating, and much inferior to the character of Saul, who scorned to make use of any mean arts, even for the preservation of his life ; who, instead of betaking himself to the enemies of God for shelter (as David did), chose voluntarily to die, rather than to fall into their hands ; and (c) though he knew assuredly that he was to fall in the battle, yet persisted in his resolution to stand by his fate, rather than betray his army, or expose his royal dignity to scorn.”

IN the fourth chapter of this book of Samuel, we read, that, upon a defeat which the Israelites had received from the Philistines, the elders of Israel advised together in council what might be the occasion of their ill success ; “ wherefore, say they, hath God smitten us to-day before the Philistines ?” The justness of their cause, they thought, was enough to entitle them to God’s favour, how wicked soever they were in their lives ; and therefore, without any thoughts of amending these, they devised another expedient that would not fail of securing them victory : (d) “ Let us fetch the ark of the covenant of the Lord, say they, out of Shiloh, that, when it comes among us, it may save us out of the hand of our enemies.” (e) They had good reason to look upon the ark of the covenant as a certain token of the presence of God among them, and of his protection over them. They had had frequent experience of battles won by virtue of his presence, and lost in the absence of it ; and whenever they had this token of the Divine assistance along with them, they always esteemed themselves invincible. They remembered the story of the walls of Jericho (f) falling down by the power of this ark’s seven times surrounding them. They had heard (g) of the defeat which their forefathers had suffered when they presumed to march against the Canaanites without their leader, and without this ark ; and were fond enough to imagine, that God himself might be looked upon as overcome, if the Philistines should have the advantage, when the ark of his presence was with them. By this means, therefore, they thought to interest his honour in the war, and make him responsible (as it were) for any disaster that should befall them ; and upon these motives it was that they sent for the ark. ANSWER.

But because they presumed to send for it without ever consulting God, as they used to do upon all momentous affairs ; because the iniquities of the people were become so enormous as not to deserve any longer the Divine Presence among them ; and because the flagitiousness of the priests (who were killed in defending the ark) had for a long time called for some judgment upon them ; that therefore his predictions concerning

(a) 1 Sam. xxii. 2.
Jewish History, lib. vi. cap. 14.

(f) Josh. vi. 4.

(b) *Christianity as old as the Creation*, p. 244.

(d) 1 Sam. iv. 3.

(g) Numb. xiv. 44, 45.

(c) *Josephus’s*
Calmet’s Commentary.

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the sons of Eli might be fulfilled, he permitted the ark to be taken, as thinking it more inconsistent with his honour to afford assistance to the wicked and presumptuous, than to admit of the profanation even of the most sacred things. What an affliction the loss of this ark was to the people of Israel, we may learn from the sad fate of Eli and his daughter-in-law, who both died for grief at the bare hearing of it; and therefore we may suppose, that a farther reason for God's permitting it, might be to bring his own people to a sense of their apostacy and ingratitude to him, when they came to consider what a damage they suffered in the departure of this symbol of his presence, which was deservedly esteemed (a) the glory of Israel.

What afflictions the taking or withholding the ark brought upon the Philistines, the fall of their god Dagon, the mice, the emerods, the pestilence, and other sore judgments, do abundantly testify; and therefore we may suppose yet farther, that God's design in permitting this capture of the ark, was to demonstrate his power among the heathens, and to let the Philistines know, that his dominion reached every where; that he was equally the Lord both of the conquerors and conquered; and that the pretended deities whom they adored, in comparison of him, were of no avail.

It was from an intent, therefore, to illustrate his Almighty Power, and not from any inability to preserve it, that God suffered this ark of the covenant to be taken; and though what the Jews call the *Schechinah*, or *visible token of God's presence*, which abode under the two cherubims, upon the propitiatory, or covering of the ark, in the shape of the cloud, might not be so apparent after it fell into the hands of the Philistines; yet that it had Divine and miraculous power attending it, is evident by their own confession, who, upon seeing the destruction that its presence had occasioned, do frankly declare, that (b) "the ark of the God of Israel should not abide with them, because his hand was sore upon them, and upon Dagon their god."

It was a particular prohibition, (c) that not only the common people, but even the Levites themselves, should not dare to look into the ark, or any other of the holy utensils belonging to the service of God, upon pain of death; and the severity of this law will not seem so unreasonable, when it is considered, that in every nation it was always accounted a great profaneness, and frequently attended with exemplary punishments, for such as were not initiated, (d) to obtrude into the mysteries of religion; and that, if the Philistines, for their irreverence to the ark, were treated with less rigour than the Bethshemites, it was because the former were not instructed in the laws of God, nor obliged to observe them.

It must be acknowledged, indeed, that there is a mistake in our translation, as well as in several others. Bethshemesh is a place of no great note in Sacred History, and (e) by Josephus it is called no more than a village; and therefore it is hardly conceivable, how it could contain such a number as fifty thousand and threescore and ten inhabitants, or why God, who is goodness itself, should make such a slaughter among those who received his ark with so much joy, and testified their gladness by their oblation of sacrifices. To solve this difficulty, therefore, some have observed, that the words in the original, and according to their natural construction, stand thus:—He smote of the people *threescore and ten men, fifty thousand men*; where there is plainly wanting some particle or other to make the sense complete. They observe further, that, if this is to be taken for a total sum, the order of the words is plainly inverted, and that the thousands should go before the inferior numbers, as is usual in all languages; and therefore since there is a manifest defect in the copy, they think it not amiss to supply it with the particle *Mem*, out of, which in many other instances is known to be omitted, and here makes the sense complete; viz. that of the people of Bethshemesh, for their irre-

(a) 1 Sam. iv. 22.
Quæst. Alnet, lib. ii, cap. 12, pag. 200.

(b) Ibid. v. 7.

(c) Numb. iv. 20.

(d) Vide *Huetii*

(e) *Jewish Antiq.* lib. vi. cap. 2.

verence to the ark, he smote *seventy men out of fifty thousand*. For, though fifty thousand men can hardly be supposed in so small a place; yet, upon hearing of the arrival of the ark, the country might flock in from other parts, and in a few days make up that number; and though, possibly, most of them might be guilty of the same profane rudeness, yet God, in his great clemency, might punish no more than seventy of them, and that on purpose to deter others from the like irreverence. For it is not unlikely, that these people might hold the ark in more contempt, since the time that it had been conquered (as it were), and led captive by their enemies; and, for this reason, God might the rather exert his vindictive arm, on purpose to teach them, that this symbol of his presence had lost none of its miraculous power, by the ill usage it had met with in its absence.

From 1 Sam.
l. to the end.

Upon the removal of the ark from Bethshemesh, (a) it is not unlikely that there was a general assembly of the elders of Israel, and that, to prevent the like offence, the ceremony was performed with the greatest order and solemnity; but why it was not carried to Shiloh, and repositied in the tabernacle, the most probable opinion is, that, after the death of Eli, the Philistines had destroyed the place, and the tabernacle was removed from thence to Nob, where it continued until the death of Samuel. As Kirjath-jearim therefore stood at no great distance, was a place of considerable strength, and had a remarkable eminence in it proper for the reception of the ark, thither it was ordered to be removed for the present, with a design, no doubt, to have it restored to its ancient seat at a convenient season: But, through the neglect of religion as well as the disturbance of the times, its removal was deferred from day to day; so that though David first brought it to the house of Obed-Edom, and then to his palace at Sion, yet we no where read † of its being replaced in the tabernacle any more.

When Samuel was highly displeased with the elders of Israel for desiring a king, and thereupon applied himself for advice, the answer which God returned him was this: (b) “Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee; for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them.” These are, no doubt, the words of an angry Sovereign, resenting the slight put upon his government and the indignity done to his person; and therefore, to give a full answer to the objection, we shall first consider the nature of the government they were under, and of that which they desired, and from thence deduce the several aggravations of their guilt, in being so importunate for a change.

Josephus, (c) in his book against Apion, has these remarkable words; “Several nations have their several forms of government, and their diversities of customs. Some governments are committed to a single person, others to a certain number of select men, and others again to all the people in general; but our lawgiver (says he) has de-

(a) *Calmet's Commentary.*

† The future history of this sacred ark is this:—After the building of the temple at Jerusalem, Solomon had it removed from Sion, into a proper place that was consecrated for it, where it remained with all suitable respect till the times of the latter kings of Judah, who gave themselves up to idolatry, and were not afraid to put the images of their gods in the holy place itself. Hereupon the priests, being unable to endure this profanation, took the ark, and carried it from place to place, that by this means it might escape the fury of these impious princes. But Josiah, who was a good man, and restored the true worship of God, commanded them to bring it back to the sanctuary, and forbade them to carry it into the country, as they had done. The Talmudists, however, have a tradition, that Solomon, having learned by re-

velation, that the Assyrians would one day burn the temple which he had lately built, and carry away all the rich materials which he had placed there, took care to have a private hole made under ground, where, in case of necessity, he might conceal the most valuable things belonging to it from the knowledge of any enemies; and that Josiah, having a foresight of the calamities which were coming upon the Jewish nation, here hid the ark of the covenant, together with Aaron's rod, the pot of manna, the high priest's pectoral, and the holy oil; but that, during the Babylonish captivity, the priests having lost all knowledge of the place where these things were concealed, they were never seen more, and were not in the second temple.” *Calmet's Dictionary under the word Ark.*

(a) 1 Sam. viii. 7.

(b) Lib. ii.

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clared, that ours shall † be a theocracy, and has ascribed all rule and sovereign power to God alone." For though it was necessary, for the due execution of his commands, that there should be some visible minister between him and his people, such as Moses and Joshua were in the time of their administration; yet it is certain that they never ordained any thing of moment without a special command from him. The same direction which was given Joshua, that (a) "he should stand before Eleazar the priest, who should ask counsel for him, after the judgment of Urim before the Lord," was required of all other persons that presided in public affairs. (b) In all cases of weighty concern they were to have recourse to him, who always reserved to himself the sole power of establishing laws, and appointing magistrates, and making war. Nay, so very desirous was God to shew himself to be king of the Hebrews, that there was no ensign of royalty belonging to earthly princes, that, by his own appointment, was not provided for him on purpose to engage the people's attention, (as the commentator on Maimonides speaks), and to make them perceive that their King, who was the Lord of Hosts, was in the midst of them.

What design God Almighty had in constituting himself the King of this people, is evident from the instructions which he gives Moses. (c) "Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel; ye have seen what I have done unto the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles wings, and brought you unto myself: Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people; for all the earth is mine, and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation."

No government can certainly be imagined more happy, more safe, more free, more honourable, than that wherein the fountain of all wisdom and power, of all justice and goodness, presides; and therefore the least that we can say of the Israelites, in desiring to change this form for such a one as was in use in the nations round about them, i. e. for an absolute and despotic government, where the princes were tyrants, and the subjects all slaves, argues at least a great pitch of folly and indiscretion, a baseness of mind, an ingratitude of temper, a spirit of rebellion, and a secret attachment to the idolatrous practices of those people whose king they were so eager to imitate. For, "Make us a king to judge us," was equivalent in their mouths (as (d) one expresses it) to what their forefathers demanded of Aaron, (e) "Make us gods, that they may go before us;" because in this manner, he who best knew the secrets of their hearts, in his answer to Samuel, has expounded their meaning, "They have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them; according to all the works

† As God's design in separating the Israelites from the rest of mankind was to perpetuate the knowledge of himself, and the doctrine of his unity, amidst an idolatrous and polytheistic world; so was he pleased to stand in two arbitrary relations towards them, in that of a tutelar deity and protector, and in that of a supreme magistrate and lawgiver; besides the natural relation in which he stood towards them and all other nations in common: But how long this theocracy continued among the Jews, the learned are not so well agreed; some thinking, that, from the first commencement of regal power, or especially from its first settlement in the line of David, it ceased, as God's words to Samuel seem to import, "they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them," 1 Sam. viii. 7. Whilst others imagine, that, from God's first espousing the cause of the Israelites in the time of their tribulation in Egypt,

even to the coming of his blessed Son our Saviour Christ in the flesh, it all along subsisted, though with some abatements, sometimes with seeming interruptions; and to this they apply that famous prophecy of Jacob, "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor the lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come," Gen. xlix. 10. i. e. The theocracy shall continue over the Jews until Christ come to take possession of his father's kingdom. For what lawgiver was there ever in Judah until the coming of Christ, but God by the ministry of Moses? *Sentimens de quelques Théologiens Lettre 5, Simon's Histoire Crit. de Vieux Test. and Warburton's Divine Legation of Moses, book v. sect. iii.*

(a) Numb. xxvii. 21.

(b) *Patrick's Commentary.*

(c) *Saurin's Dissert.* 25. vol. iv. Exod. xix. 3, &c.

(d) *Saurin, ibid.* (e) Exod. xxxii. 1.

which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt, even unto this day, they have forsaken me and served other gods.” From 1 Sam.
i to the end.

We have but one thing more to remark upon this subject, and that is,—That the manner in which they demanded a king was no less culpable than the ends they proposed by it: For, instead of consulting God upon an affair of this consequence, they went hastily to Samuel, and when, by fair remonstrances, he is attempting to dissuade them from so dangerous an enterprise, they turn impetuously upon him, and say, “nay, but we will have a king;” and this may be the reason perhaps why “God gave them one in his anger,” descended of the meanest tribe in Israel, and of the meanest family in that tribe, to shew them, that he himself was not satisfied with their proceedings, nor could be pleased with any thing that was extorted from him by undutiful importunities.

The meanness of Saul’s family indeed was the reason that some, who were present at his election, openly despised him, and said, (a) “How can this man save us?” And therefore it is not unlikely, that, as these seditious men refused to submit to his government, he might leave the public affairs in Samuel’s hands, and return to his father’s house, and there live privately until some opportunity of better establishing his authority should happen to present itself. But, even in this interval, supposing he did betake himself to some rural employment, yet where is the great disparagement of this, when we find the same done in other nations by persons of the like rank and quality? When we find your Curii, your Attilii, your Cincinnati, and several other illustrious Romans, leaving the plough to assume the reins of government, and afterwards leaving the government to return to the plough?

It must be acknowledged, however, that Saul’s external qualifications, viz. the stature and comeliness of his person, was no small recommendation to a people who desired a king such as their neighbours had. For, whatever we may think of the matter, the people of the east had always a regard to these in the choice of their kings; and accordingly Herodotus, having taken a review of Xerxes’s whole army, after a short pause, declares himself thus:—That (b) “among such a multitude of people, there was not one, who, for tallness and goodness of person, did deserve the throne so much as he;” and in another place assures us, that (c) “the Ethiopians always esteemed him, who was of the most advantageous stature, the fittest to be chosen king;” which cannot but remind us of what Samuel says to the people when he presents Saul to them: (d) “See ye him whom the Lord hath chosen, that there is none like him among all the people;” for the historian had told us before, that (e) “from his shoulders and upwards he was higher than any of the people.”

Nay, had I leisure to gratify the curious, I might shew, that not only in the east, but in the western and most polite countries, this tallness of stature, and gracefulness of appearance, were always deemed no unbecoming qualifications for the regal dignity; and therefore we find Pliny, who certainly was a fine speaker, and knew how to single out the proper qualities in any great man, telling his audience, in his panegyric on Trajan, that “the strength and tallness of his body, the nobleness of his aspect, the dignity of his countenance, and the gracefulness of his speech, did everywhere denote and proclaim the prince;” as, on the contrary, what notions the ancients had of a prince of a low stature, and mean appearance, we may gather from the fine, which (f) Plutarch tells us, the Lacedæmonians set upon their king for marrying a little woman, who was likely to bring οὐ βασιλείας, ἀλλὰ βασιλίσκους, “not kings, but kinglings” to reign over them.

It must be remembered, however, that tallness of stature was not the only thing that recommended Saul to the kingdom. His father is said to have been (g) “a mighty man of power;” which, though it may not signify his great wealth, and interest in his coun-

(a) Sam. x. 27.

(b) Herodotus, lib. vi. c. 77.

(c) Ibid. lib. vi. c. 20.

(d) 1 Sam. x. 24.

(e) Ibid. ix. 2.

(f) In the beginning of his book περί παιδῶν ἀγωνίας.

(g) 1 Sam. ix. 1.

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try, (because (a) Saul himself declares the contrary) yet it doubtless denotes his strength, and courage, and fortitude of mind, which, in a great measure, he transmitted to his son. For who in war was more brave and undaunted than he, had he but known how to use his victories as well as acquire them? But here was his great misfortune, that when he was successful, he was too apt to be unmindful of what God had enjoined him. Who in peace was more prudent and politic than he, till his fears and jealousies of David, mixed with an unhappy temper of blood, made him malicious and implacable? Nothing can be supposed more wise and discreet than his (b) "holding his peace," and taking no notice of the slights which were put upon him at his first election; nothing more great and generous than his answer to some who would have prompted him to revenge, after he had established his throne by a glorious conquest: (c) "There shall not be a man put to death this day; for to-day the Lord hath wrought salvation in Israel."

Nothing certainly was more different than Saul's modestly declining the offer of a kingdom; when elected, passing by indignities, and returning to a private life; when called out to action, mustering his forces, leading out his armies, vanquishing his enemies, relieving his friends; and, when settled in peace, forgiving injuries and conferring benefits; and the same Saul, sullen and discontented with himself, false to his promises, jealous of his friends, listening to sycophants, quarrelling with his relations, attempting the life of his own son, murdering a whole city of God's priests, and instead of consulting the Divine Oracle, flying to the devil for advice in his distress; and therefore we need less wonder, that we find the beginning of his reign so prosperous, and the latter part of it ending in so sad a catastrophe.

Whether Saul deserved this fate or no, we may best perceive by a review of some instances wherein he is said to have offended God. In the beginning of the third year of his reign, the Philistines raised so powerful an army against him, that his own forces, for fear of them, deserted in great numbers. Gilgal was the place of their rendezvous, and Samuel, who had hitherto transacted matters between God and Saul, had given him assurance, that in seven days time he would come thither (d) "to offer sacrifices and peace-offerings, and to shew him what he was to do;" but (as Abarbinel has observed) every one of these articles he transgressed. For, (besides that he distrusted Samuel's word, or thought it scorn perhaps that the king should stay for a prophet) instead of waiting till the appointed days were expired, he called for the sacrifices on the seventh morning: instead of ordering a proper person to officiate, himself adventured to offer up the sacrifice; and, instead of enquiring of God in a regular way, he was determined to begin the war without any previous consultation: so that, in this behaviour of his, there were all the signs of pride and ingratitude, impatience and distrust, neglect of God, contempt of his prophet, and an apparent invasion of the priestly office; upon which accounts Samuel declares, that (e) God would reject him, "and not continue the kingdom" in his family.

God, no doubt, by his Divine Omniscience, foresaw what other sins Saul would commit, and might therefore, without any breach of his mercy, have pronounced a peremptory sentence against him; but the passage before us implies no such thing. It is no more than a threat, or a simple denunciation of what God would do, if he were not more observant for the future; and might have been revoked, had he not persisted in his disobedience, and committed a much greater offence against the Divine Majesty in the war against Amalek.

The opposition which these people gave the Israelites while they were on their journey to the land of Canaan, provoked God to such a degree, that (as the historian relates the matter) he swore, that (f) "he would have war with Amalek from generation

(a) 1 Sam. ix. 21.
(e) Ibid. xiii. 14.

(b) Ibid. x. 27.
(f) Exod. xvii. 13, 14.

(c) Ibid. xi. 13.

(d) Ibid. x. 8.

to generation ;” and therefore commanded Moses “ to write it, for a memorial, in a book, and to rehearse it in the ears of Joshua, that he would utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven ;” and when they were upon the point of entering upon the promised land, they were reminded of the same Divine decree against that wicked people : (a) “ Remember what Amalek did unto thee by the way, when ye were come forth out of Egypt, how he met thee by the way, and smote the hindmost of thee, even all that were feeble behind thee, when thou wast faint and weary, and he feared not God : Therefore it shall be, when the Lord thy God hath given thee rest from all thine enemies round about, in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee for an inheritance to possess it, that thou shalt blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven ; thou shalt not forget it.” In this passage we have some reasons assigned why God was so highly incensed against the Amalekites. (b) They were descendants of Esau (c) ; and therefore, by pedigree, were allied to the Israelites, and of the stock of Abraham. (d) They seem to have broke off with the Edomites very early, and to have joined themselves with the old Horites, a nest of idolaters that lived on Mount Seir ; and so turned apostates from the religion of Abraham. These apostates were the first that drew the sword against the Israelites, who were their brethren in blood, and, without any manner of provocation, took the advantage, and came upon their rear while they were feeble, faint, and weary, which was not only a great inhumanity, but done with an intent to defeat God’s design in bringing up the people of Israel, and to hinder, if possible, their entrance into Canaan ; for which reason the impiety of these people is particularly taken notice of, viz. “ that they feared not God, but that their hand was lifted up against the throne of the Lord, against the throne of the God of Abraham, their father,” which was no small aggravation of their crime. It was for these reasons, then, that God had determined to destroy the whole race of Amalek, and had made choice of Saul to put his decree in execution : And if, to indulge his own covetousness, he thought proper to prevaricate in the matter, he became guilty of the like sin (to use the words of the learned Dr Jackson), “ as if a judge, or inferior magistrate, being intrusted to do justice in a matter, unto which his sovereign had peremptorily and determinately sworn, should, upon a bribe, or other sinister respect, neglect his duty, and as much as in him lay make his master foresworn.” And as a judge that would dare to do this deserves more deaths than one ; so, considering the infinite difference between God and man, and the long train of wickedness which Saul afterwards ran into, the severity can hardly be thought excessive, in God’s punishing his contempt of this great command, by the alienation of the crown from his family.

“ But why should the Amalekites, for offences committed by their forefathers so many years before, deserve this punishment ? Or suppose they did, why should young children and infants suffer, as guilty, for the crimes of their parents ?” Our blessed Saviour, in a case somewhat like this, has helped us to a solution of the former part of this question, when he tells the Jews of his time, that (e) “ they built the sepulchres of the prophets, which their fathers had killed ; that in so doing, they allowed or approved of their deeds ; and that therefore the blood of all the prophets, which had been shed from the foundation of the world, should be required of that generation.” From whence we may draw this inference,—That when any particular people commit the same crimes that their ancestors did, when they approve of them, when they imitate them, and, by the like actions, declare, that if they were in their circumstances, they would pursue the same steps, they are justly punishable, even in virtue of the sentence which passed upon their ancestors ; and that the Divine suspension of that sentence, in order to try whether they would reform and amend, is so far from being an hardship,

From 1 Sam.
i. to the end.

(a) Deut. xxv. 17, &c.
genealogy of the Amalekites.]

(b) Gen. xxxvi. 12.

(d) *Scripture Vindicated*, part ii.

(c) [Probably not. See the preceding

(e) Luke xi. 47, &c.

A. M. 2888,
&c. or 4301.
Ant. Chris.
1116, &c.
or 1110.

that the longer it is continued, the more it is an instance of God's mercy and patience and long-suffering.

Now, whoever looks into the conduct of the descendants of these old Amalekites, and considers the several oppressions which occasioned the exploits of Ehud, Gideon, Jephthah, and Saul, will soon perceive, that these later generations were every moment renewing the rancour and hostilities of their forefathers against the children of Israel, and consequently were very justly comprised under the sentence which had originally passed upon them.

(a) "Children indeed shall not be put to death for their fathers:" But this prohibition, we must observe, relates to men, and not to God. (b) Men, when they put a child to death for the sin of his father, assume an authority that they have no right to. The law which authorises them to punish the father gives them no power over the life of the child; † but God is sovereign Lord and Master of the lives of both. Men who kill the child, to aggravate the punishment of the father, can give the child no equivalent for the loss of his life; but God, in the future dispensation of things, can render him an ample compensation for it; and therefore, since, in a general devastation, whether of war, famine, or pestilence, without a Divine interposition for every particular person, the innocent must necessarily suffer with the guilty, it is satisfaction enough to think, that these innocent persons do not finally perish when they die, but are thenceforward taken under God's immediate care, and in the world to come will find their retribution, (c) Those, of all others, who die in their infancy, (in what manner soever it be), have reason to bless God, what grief soever it may give their parents, for being delivered out of the miseries of this life, in order to be made happy in another.

Several of the Jewish doctors are of opinion, that after the death of Eli and his sons, Samuel, by God's particular election, succeeded to the high priest's office; and this they are the rather induced to believe, because they read of his offering sacrifices in places distinct from the tabernacle; of his wearing an ephod, which was a vestment peculiar to the priest; of his consecrating two kings, Saul and David; and find (d) the Psalmist placing him among persons of that order and distinction. But the more probable opinion is, that he was no more than a Levite, and by birth incapable of the priesthood, which was only annexed to Aaron's family; that there is no mention made in Scripture of his having any particular designation to that office; that there is no reason to think, that God would break through his own laws and ordinances in favour of him, when there was no occasion for it, since Hophni and Phineas, when they died, †² might have sons of sufficient age to succeed them; that his putting on an ephod, was no more than what David did; his sacrificing from the tabernacle, what Gideon and Saul did; and his anointing kings, what both Elias and Elisha did: so that these little incidents of his life could never give him that character. And though it be granted, that the Psalmist has thought proper to place him in company with Moses and Aaron, yet, at the same time, he has taken care to point us out the difference between them; "Moses and Aaron among the priests, and Samuel among such as call upon his name," i. e. who sing God's praise; which was the common employment of the Levites. Put the case then, that Samuel was no priest, yet it seems to be a privilege indulged to some great

(a) Deut. xxiv. 16.

(b) Saurin's Dissert. 30. vol. iv.

† Deus quidem in lege Hebræis datâ paternam impietatem in posteros se vindicaturam minatur: sed ipse Deus jus Domini plenissimum habet, ut in res nostras, ita in vitam nostram, ut munus suum, quod sine ulla causa et quovis tempore auferre cuivis, quando vult, potest. Grotius, de Jure Belli, vol. ii.

(c) Le Clerc's Comment. in 1 Sam. xv. 8.

(d) Psal. xcix. 6.

†² It is generally supposed, but without any grounds, that the exercise of the high priest's function was not entered upon till such an age, and that Eli's grandchildren were not as yet qualified for it: But Josephus (Antiq. lib. xv. c. 2) informs us, that Aristobulus, the brother of Mariamne, was both admitted into that place, and officiated in it, when he was no more than seventeen years old. Calmet's Comment. in 1 Sam. xxv. 1.

men, upon some extraordinary occasions, to offer sacrifices, where there was neither the tabernacle, nor any altar, but what they themselves erected. Thus (a) Gideon and Manoah both, by the directions of an angel, made their burnt-offerings just by their own habitations, and upon no other altar than a rock; and yet, that they were accepted by God, is evident from the miraculous fire that did consume them.

From 1 Sam.
i. to the end

In most countries indeed, the priesthood was a privilege annexed to the regal dignity, and even in the Jewish economy, where the sacerdotal office was distinct. Thus David, upon the reduction of the ark, sacrificed oxen and fatlings, (b) and Solomon, in the beginning of his reign, and before the temple was built, sacrificed in high places (c). But there is much more to be said for Samuel: He lived in a place that was an academy of the prophets, and whither much people resorted to be instructed in the law. Shiloh was now laid desolate, and the ark, which was the tabernacle's chief furniture, was separated from it; so that till God had declared his choice of some other place, the people were, in a great measure, at liberty where to offer their devotions; and Samuel more especially, in a city of so great concourse, and where he himself presided, was obliged in conscience to provide the people, in the best manner he could, with a public place of worship. He himself did but rarely, and upon extraordinary occasions, officiate in the sacrifice, yet that, whenever he did it, he did it with the acceptance and approbation of God, is plain from the testimony of Scripture, and the success which God gave him against his enemies, after he had performed such an act of devotion: For thus the account is, (d) "And Samuel took a sucking lamb, and offered it for a burnt-offering wholly unto the Lord; and Samuel cried unto the Lord for Israel; and the Lord heard him, and the Lord thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Philistines, and discomfited them, and they were smitten before Israel." [Whether he offered this sacrifice with his own hands is nowhere said, and is not of the smallest importance; for it was certainly offered by inspiration, and no one has ever supposed that God could not authorise any man to perform an office, which, without such authority, he could not have attempted without incurring guilt of the deepest dye.]

* The Jews themselves acknowledge, that a prophet is not subject to the ceremonial law, but may, at any time, himself sacrifice in what place he pleases: And therefore, when Samuel went to Bethlehem to anoint David, it cannot be questioned but that he had a right to sacrifice there, though there was neither ark nor tabernacle in the place; nor can it be denied, but that one part of his errand was to offer the sacrifice which he carried along with him. He had indeed an affair of greater consequence to transact at the same time; but I cannot see under what obligation he was to discover that. (a) Secrecy is of great use in all important negotiations, and the concealing of one design, under the umbrage of another, is as just and laudable a practice, as the drawing of a curtain to keep out spies. Acts of religion, indeed, are sometimes made cloaks for iniquity; but it is hard to conceive what possible prevarication there could be in performing one act of obedience towards God, in order to facilitate the performance of another.

(a) Judg. vi. 20. and xiii. 19. (b) 2 Sam. vi. 13.

(c) 1 Kings iii. 2, 3. [It is strange that our author should represent David and Solomon as taking on them the office of priests, and offering sacrifices with their own hands. The texts to which he refers say no such thing; and that which relates to the *reduction*, as he calls it, of the ark, plainly shews, that David neither did nor could officiate as a priest on the occasion. It is indeed said that both he and his son Solomon offered sacrifices, and the latter in high places, for which he is certainly not praised; but they offered them in no other way than the people offered sacrifices by the ministry of the priests, or than the

leper who was cleansed (St Luke iii. 4.) offered by our Lord's direction the gift, which Moses had commanded on such occasions. The sacrifices are said to have been offered by David, Solomon, the people of Israel, and the leper, not because they officiated as priests, but because the sacrifices were offered for them, and of their property.]

(d) 1 Sam. vii. 9, 10.

* *Autoritas prophetæ facit, ut sacrificium, ubicunque is adest, et imperat, ritè fiat; subsunt enim prophetæ imperio leges rituales, fatentibus Hæbreis.* Grotius, in 1 Sam. xvi. 2.

(a) *Scripture Vindicated*, part ii.

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1116, &c. or
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The short of the matter is, when there are two ends of any action (as there were in the case now before us), a man may, without any injury to truth, declare the one and conceal the other; nor can any imputation justly fall upon God for suggesting an expedient to his servant, in the execution of which there confessedly was no sin.

And for the same reason, because it was by God's direction, or the instigation of his Holy Spirit, that Samuel cut Agag in pieces, we cannot say that this resentment carried him beyond the bounds of respect that was due to his sovereign. Agag had been a bloody tyrant, and was now cut off, not for the sins of his ancestors only, but for his own merciless cruelty. His death had been predicted above 400 years before (a) by the prophet Balaam; but Saul, out of a mistimed compassion, and in opposition to the express commands of God, had thought proper to spare him. Here therefore was a fit occasion for Samuel to exert himself, and, notwithstanding the presence of his prince, to vindicate the honour of his God, by expressing a zeal suitable to (b) that of Phineas in slaying Zimri, or of that noble band of Levites, (c) who destroyed the worshippers of the golden calf; though it does not necessarily follow that he slew him himself, (d) because what he commanded might be called his own act, though it was nevertheless done by the public executioner of justice.

Some commentators have been so far carried away with the manner of the Scripture expression, viz. that (e) "an evil spirit from the Lord troubled Saul," as to think, that he was really possessed with a devil, which at certain times came strongly upon him, and threw him into all the mad fits whereof we read. But it should be considered, that the word *spirit*, in the sacred language, is of a very extensive signification, and denotes frequently, not only the dispositions of the mind, (f) but those of the body likewise; that the custom of the Jews was to imagine, that every affliction, whose cause they were ignorant of, proceeded immediately from God; and that it is a very common thing to find the Scripture phrase accommodating itself to this vulgar prejudice. Now, in our interpretation of Scripture, this, I think, should be a rule,—That when a passage is capable of two senses, whereof the one supposes a miracle, and the other a natural event only, the latter should take place, especially when there are no circumstances to determine us to the contrary. But now, in the case before us, (g) the frequent access of Saul's malady, the symptoms that attended it, and the remedy made use of to assuage it, do sufficiently denote, that it proceeded from a deep melancholy, or black bile inflamed; and that the man was hypochondriac rather than possessed. Agreeable to this bad complexion of body was the natural temper of his mind, which, through his whole conduct, was suspicious, diffident, cruel, passionate, and vindictive. Add to this, that the remorse of his conscience, the menaces of Samuel, God's rejection of him, and his continual apprehensions of being either dethroned or put to death by his competitor, confirmed still more and more the evil dispositions which his distemper engendered, and carried them by fits into downright madness: And as madness is occasioned by an atrabilious humour highly inflamed and diffused through the blood, and from melancholic vapours, which ascend to the brain, and make an alteration in its temperature, it is no hard matter to conceive, that the agreeable sound of a musical instrument, which occasions joy and self-complacency, should dissipate these bad humours, and make the blood and spirits return to their equal and natural motion.

What the power of music is, to sweeten the temper, and allay and compose the passions of the mind, we have some examples from sacred history, but many more from the profane. As this same Saul was returning from Samuel, he met at the place, which is called (h) "the hill of God," a company of prophets playing on several instruments;

(a) Numb. xxiv. 7.
Commentary, in 1 Sam. xii. 33.
iv. 12.

(b) Ibid. xxv. 1.
(e) 1 Sam. xvi. 14.
(g) Calmet's Commentary, in 1 Sam. xvi. 14.

(c) Exod. xxxii. 27.

(d) Patrick's
(f) Vid. Job. xvii. 1. and Hosea
(h) 1 Sam. x. 5, &c.

and such was the effect of their melody, "that the Spirit (as the Scripture expresses it) came upon him, and he was turned into another man" When Elisha was desired by Jehoshaphat to tell him what his success against the king of Moab would be, the prophet required a minstrel to be brought unto him; (a) "and when the minstrel played, it is said, that the hand of the Lord came upon him:" (b) Not that we are to suppose, that the gift of prophecy was the natural effect of music, but the meaning is, that music disposed the organs, the humours, the blood, and, in short, the whole mind and spirit of the prophet, to receive the supernatural impression. The truth is, common experience, as well as the testimony of the gravest authors, does prove, that there is in music a certain charm, to revive the spirits, mellow the humours, allay the passions, and consequently to dissipate that rage, or melancholy, which either fumes up into the brain in vapours, or overspreads the heart with grief and dejection. We need less wonder, therefore, that we find (c) the Pythagoreans, whenever they perceived, either in themselves or others, any violent passion beginning to arise, immediately betaking themselves either to their flute or their guittar; that we find (d) Theophrastus declaring, that music is an excellent remedy against several distempers, both of the mind and body; (e) others, that Asclepiades, a renowned physician among the ancients, was used to cure madness by the power of symphony; and (f) others again, that the most violent poison, that of the sting of the tarantula, has been expelled very frequently by this means. The only remaining difficulty is, how David, with his single harp, and unassisted with any other instruments, could effect such a cure upon Saul? And to satisfy this, I must be obliged to enquire a little into the nature of the Jewish music which was possibly in vogue at that time.

Music, though an art of no necessity to human life, was certainly of a very early invention. Before the deluge, Jubal is called the father or master of those who played upon the harp and † ancient organ, as the two Hebrew words (g) in that place are generally translated. In the time of Jacob, we find his father-in-law complaining of him, (h) that he had stolen away from him, and not given him an opportunity of dismissing him honourably, "with mirth and with song, with tabret and with harp"

(i) Moses, upon his passage over the Red Sea, composed a song which was sung in parts by himself, at the head of the men, and by (k) his sister, with timbrels and dancing, leading up the women. Samuel, upon his institution of the schools of the prophets, introduced several kinds of music; so that, before Saul's election to the kingdom, (l) we read of the psaltery and tabret, the pipe and the harp, in use among them. The kings of the east made it a point of their grandeur and magnificence, to have men to play to them upon several occasions; and therefore we may suppose, that Saul, when he came to the throne, in some reasonable time, conformed to the mode. David, who was himself a great master of music, kept in his house (m) some companies of singing men and singing women, as the words of old Barzillai seem to imply; and Solomon, who denied his heart no pleasure, came not behind his father in this respect; for he had his (n) men singers and women singers likewise, and musical instruments of all sorts. Josephus tells us, that he had two hundred thousand, merely for the use of the temple; and therefore we may well suppose, that he had no small variety of them for the use of the musicians that attended his person.

M. Le Clerc seems to be of opinion, that the music of the ancient Hebrews was not very regular: "They were a nation, says he, entirely given to agriculture, and had

(a) 2 Kings iii. 15.

(b) Calmet's Commentary, in 1 Sam. xxvi. 17.

(c) *Ælianus*

Var. Hist. lib. xiv. c. 27.

(d) In libro πηλι ἐνθουσιασμων.

(e) *Censorinus*, de Die Natali,

lib. xii.

(f) Vid. *Saurin*, vol. iv. dissert. 33.

† This instrument in Hebrew is named

Hugab, and was a kind of flute composed of several pipes, of a different bigness, joined to one another.Calmet's Dictionary, under the word *Music*.

(g) Gen. iv. 21.

(h) Ibid. xxxi. 27.

(i) Exod. xv.

(k) Ibid. ver. 20.

(l) 1 Sam. x. 5.

(m) 2 Sam. xix. 35.

(n) Eccles. ii. 8.

A. M. 2888,
&c. or 4301.
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neither theatres nor any public diversions of this kind; all the use which they made of their music, consisted in singing some sacred hymns which David instituted; but we have no reason to think, that their performances of this kind were either harmonious or methodical." But now, the learned Kircher has confuted all this. For, (a) "It is not probable, says he, that such an innumerable quantity of musical instruments, made by the most skilful hands, should serve only to produce some rude and inartificial sounds. Among the Hebrews there was certainly a wonderful order of songs and chanters, a wonderful distribution of the singers, and a wonderful agreement of words fitted to harmonious notes; neither is it likely, that all the instruments of one choir did perform their parts in unison, but that they made a various harmony, with an admirable and accurate contexture of the upper parts with their respective basses."

But suppose we (as some) imagine, that they wanted the harmony of a concert, or several parts of music going on at the same time; yet it is much to be questioned, whether that simplicity of composition which resembles nature most, is not a greater beauty and perfection, than that combination of several voices and tunes which constitutes our concerts. For (to use the words of another author in a science wherein I profess to be no adept), "The ancients, (b) says he, had as great a number of instruments as we; they had their symphonies and voices of all sorts as well as we; but then they had this advantage above us, that their singing voices and instruments neither drowned the words, nor destroyed the sense of what they sung. While their ears were charmed with the melody, and their hearts touched with the delicacy of the song, their minds were transported with the beauty of the words, with the liveliness, grandeur, or tenderness of the sentiments. So that, at one and the same time, they had all the pleasurable impressions and sensations, that the most exact imagery of thoughts and sentiments, joined with symphony or a true harmony, could produce in their breasts:" and for this reason it is rightly supposed by Josephus, that while David played upon his harp, he sung psalms and hymns to king Saul, whose words very probably were adapted to the occasion, and that both these put together were conducive to his cure; though God, without doubt, who gave a blessing to his endeavours, was the principal cause of it.

That David's skill in playing upon the harp, in a great measure removed Saul's melancholy, is manifest from his retiring from court to his father's house, and betaking himself to his usual occupation of a shepherd. How long he continued with his father the Scripture is silent; but a short time might be sufficient to impair the king's remembrance of him, especially when he appeared in another dress than what he wore at court, and was just now come off rough from a journey. He had played to the king: indeed, and happily relieved his disorder; but who knows but that he then wore an habit proper for his profession as a musician, and (as clothes make a great alteration in a man) appeared now quite another creature in his plain shepherd's garb? Who knows but that the (c) minister (whoever he was) that recommended him to the king, finding that his music proved medicinal to him, might take the freedom to send to his father, and request that his son might continue a little longer at court, even without the king's knowledge or direction? And it seems not unlikely, that the office of armour-bearer (whatever it imported) was a place of honour and respect, more than strict duty and attendance, because we find David sometimes retiring to his father's house as not obliged always to reside at court.

Without our supposing then, (as some commentators have done) that Saul's distemper had disturbed his head, and impaired his memory, we need but consider the humour and fashions of a court, the hurry of business, the multitude of servants, the variety of faces, and the shoals of comers and goers that are every day seen there; and withal, consider

(a) Musurgia Univcr. lib. ii. c. iv.
Comment. in 1 Sam. xxvii. 55.

(b) Calmet's Dissert. sur la Musique des Anciens.

(c) Le Clerc's

the momentous issue of a battle lost or won, and what full employ the king or his chief commander must have for all his thought and attention, when an army is drawn up in array, and ready to engage; and then we may easily account both for Saul and Abner's wanting recollection, when they saw David disguised in his shepherd's coat, and now entering upon an action that was quite contrary to the character of a musician.

From 1 Sam.
i. to the end.

(a) But, after all, the words in the text say nothing of Saul's forgetfulness of David, or that he enquired who he was. They only intimate, that he was ignorant of his family, and desired to be informed from what parent he was descended; and considering how many servants there are in every court, (especially in a lower station) whose pedigree the king knows nothing of, and how apt we are all to forget the names of those who live at a distance, (as Jesse did from Saul) and with whom we hold little or no intercourse, we need not much wonder that Saul, who had no concern for David's family before this adventure, should quite forget the name of his father, living in another country, and which he had cursorily heard perhaps, but never once fixed in his mind: But now that the son was going upon a desperate enterprize, and was (b) "to have great riches," as well as the king's daughter, if he came off victorious, it did not a little behove the king to know something more of the parentage of this young champion, and into what family he was to match his daughter: And upon this presumption, there is no madness, no absurdity; no incongruity in his bidding Abner "(c) enquire whose son the stripling is. It is a brave and gallant youth. I am charmed with his courage and behaviour. If he falls in the attempt, he shall have an honourable interment; if he succeeds and slays the giant, he shall be my son-in-law."

The Jews give a very romantic reason for David's going to Achish, the king of the Philistines, viz. that it was to demand an execution of the treaty, (whereby the conqueror was to have a sovereign power and dominion over the conquered), which Goliath proposed when he challenged the Israelites; and that upon this account, the chief ministers about that king were so alarmed at his arrival, "Is not this David, the king of this our land?" (d) as some take the words. It is apparent, however, from the context, that the land, to which these words relate is Judea, and that David, at this time, was in no condition to make any high demands.

Saul's rancour and rage against him was so implacable, and now that so many were turned informers against him, his power to apprehend him was become so great, that there was no staying any longer in his dominions; and therefore David's business was to find out some safe retreat. All the other neighbouring princes were at peace with Saul, and must have delivered him up, had Saul demanded him. Achish was the only one in hostility with him, and therefore his kingdom the most proper place for David's refuge, where, though he might not hope to lie long concealed, yet he might nevertheless promise himself kind quarter from the advantages that would accrue to Achish, in attaching to his interest a person that was evidently the strength of the Jewish, and terror of the Philistine army. Hard was the fate of David, it must be owned, when he was forced to flee for protection to those whom he had reason to believe were his bitterest enemies; but many great men have been compelled to the same thing; Themistocles to go over to the Persians, and Alcibiades to the Lacedemonians, without turning apostates to the interest of their country.

Self-preservation is one of the first laws of nature; and therefore if David, when he came to the court of Achish, found his life in manifest danger, I cannot see why he might not make use of any means, consistent with a good conscience, for the preservation of it. He chose to personate the fool, because he presumed that Achish would readily conclude, that the troubles he had suffered under Saul's persecution of him, had

(a) *Saurin's Dissert. sur le Combat de David.*
(d) *Vid. Sol. Jarchi, ad 1 Sam. xxi. 12.*

(b) 1 Sam. xvii. 25.

(c) *Ibid. ver. 56.*

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stupidified his senses, and turned his head. But he was not the last wise man who put on that disguise; for (a) did not Solon, when he found that the Athenians were going to surrender Salamine, his native country, into the hands of the people of Megara, counterfeited the madman, that he might with more impunity take the freedom to divert them from it? And (b) Lucius Brutus, that wise imitator of the fool (as he is called), made use of the same artifice, to escape the suspicion of Tarquin, who had already murdered his father and eldest brother, in order to seize on their great riches.

But supposing that there were no examples of other wise men to countenance this practice of David's; yet wherever did we read, in the word of God, that stratagems were not allowable against an enemy? When the Israelites besieged Ai, God himself gave them orders to make a feint, as though they fled, that they might thereby draw the people out of the city; and can the difference be so great, in pretending to a want of courage, and in counterfeiting a deprivation of reason? A Divine direction indeed was in the one, and we do not read that it was in the other case; but why might not God, who had David always under his immediate care and protection, put him upon this expedient, as the only escape he had for his life? Or if the expedient was matter of his own invention, since the circumstances he was in did absolutely require it, it cannot deserve our blame, according to that common distich, that goes under no less a name than Cato's,

Insipiens esto, cum tempus postulat, aut res,
Stultitiam simulare loco, prudentia summa est.

This might be some apology for David's conduct at this critical juncture, supposing that he personated the fool or madman: But if we look into the Scripture account of this transaction a little more narrowly, we may possibly perceive, that David did not dissemble, or act a part upon this occasion, but that he was really seized with a distemper; and that distemper, in all probability, was an epilepsy, or falling-sickness.

For whereas it is said of David, that (c) "he was struck to the heart (for so it should be rendered) at the words" which the officers of Achish said to their master, and thereupon was sore afraid of the king, lest, at their instigation, he should put him to death; nothing is known to cause an epilepsy sooner * than a sudden and violent fright. Whereas it is said in our translation, that (d) "he changed his behaviour before them;" the words in the Hebrew are, *his taste* (whereby some understand his reason) *was changed*; but the Septuagint seem to have hit upon the right sense, ἡλλοίωσε τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ, *his visage, or countenance, was changed*; for every one knows what a sudden alteration a fit of this distemper occasions in any one's looks. Whereas it is said in our translation, that "he feigned himself mad" in their hands, the Septuagint render it παρεφέρετο ἐν ταῖς χερσὶν αὐτοῦ, *he trembled*, and was convulsed in his hands, as having no power to direct their motions, which is another known effect of an epilepsy. Whereas, again, our translation says, that "he scrambled, or (according to the marginal note) made marks upon the doors of the gate," the Septuagint render the words ἐπιπτεν ἐπὶ τὰς θύρας τῆς πύλης, *he fell down against the door of the gate*, and the Hebrew word *tava* implies, *with such force and violence*, as even to leave marks or prints upon them; so that he could not but bruise and hurt himself very much by these falls. Nor is this all; for there is something in the words of Achish (if we will but adhere to the version of the Septuagint),

(a) *Diogen. Laertius*, lib. i. in Solon.

(b) *Dionys. Halicarn. Antiq. Rom.* lib. 4.

(c) 1 Sam. xxi. 12.

* The author of the book which goes under the name of Hippocrates, written professedly upon this subject, (περὶ ἰέγουσ νόσου) among many other causes

of this distemper, makes mention of a sudden fright as one:

Ἐπιματάρρεται δὲ ἐξ ἀδήλου φόβου γινόμενον

(d) 1 Sam. xxi. 13.

that shews David's distemper to have been the falling sickness beyond all controversy: From I Sam. i. to the end. For, whereas our translation is, "Lo, you see the man is mad, wherefore then have you brought him to me? I have no need of madmen;" the words of the Septuagint are *ἰδοὺ ἔδωκε ἄνδρα ἐπιληπτον; ἵνατι εἰσγάγετε αὐτὸν πρὸς ἐμὲ; Ἡ ἐλαττοῦμαι ἐπιλήπτων ἐγὼ;* *Why did ye bring this man before me? Ye see that he is in an epilepsy, and epileptic men I do not want. Why then did you bring him to be taken with a fit in my presence?* Had David all this while been only "playing the fool," as our translation makes him, he might possibly have given Achish some diversion (as * fools in great houses were often kept to give diversion) by his aukward or frantic tricks; (a) but the horror wherewith the king was struck at the first sight of him, and his indignation against his officers, for bringing him into his presence, are enough to make one believe, that his distemper had made him a frightful object: and therefore the king commanded immediately to have him removed out of his presence, and out of the palace.

Upon the whole, therefore, we may conclude, that as David had the true symptoms of an epilepsy upon him, which, in all probability, was occasioned by a violent fright; God, in his good Providence, might permit this distemper to befall him at this juncture, in order to facilitate his escape out of the hands of Achish, and as soon as the danger was over, restored him to his former health again. For this reason we find him, in those psalms which he is thought to have composed upon this occasion, alluding both to the nature of his distemper, and to God's goodness in preserving him in it, and delivering him from it: (b) "Great are the troubles of the righteous; but the Lord delivereth him out of all: He keepeth all his bones, so that not one of them is broken; and therefore (c) unto thee, O God, will I pay my vows, unto thee will I give thanks; for thou hast delivered my soul from death, and my feet from falling, that I may walk before God in the light of the living."

David upon his escape from the court of Achish, not knowing of any other place of retreat, betook himself to the cave of Adullam, where he found it necessary to provide for his security, by putting himself upon some foot of defence. Jonathan, from full conviction, had told him, (as himself from frequent experience had found) that his father at all adventures would endeavour to take away his life. His family by this time were fallen under the displeasure of Saul, and were in danger of being all cut off (as lately were the priests of Nob) under pretence of a conspiracy against him; and therefore it is no wonder that his brethren, having this apprehension of danger before their eyes, resorted to him for their own security; no wonder that in *² times of national dis-

* Tarquin the Proud kept L. Junius Brutus as a fool, (for so he pretended to be) to divert his children with his absurd discourse and actions. But Anacharsis, who lived about three hundred years after David, complains of this custom among the Grecians, by telling us, "that a man was a creature too serious to be designed for so ridiculous a purpose;" and (to shew the continuance of this custom (Pliny, writing to one of his friends, who had complained to him, that at a great entertainment he had passed his time but very disagreeably, by reason of the kept fools, who were always interrupting conversation, tells him, that every one has his taste, but, as for himself, he could never be delighted with such extravagancies, though some complaisance was due to those of another way of thinking. *Epist.* 17.

(a) *Saurin* vol. iv. dis. 34. in Mr Dumont's letter.

(b) *Psal.* xxxiv. 19. (c) *Ibid.* lvi. 12, 13.

*² Though there be no comparison between the proceedings of a very righteous and very wicked man, David and Catiline, yet it may not be amiss, upon this oc-

casion, to take notice of what Sallust says of Manlius, Catiline's agent and ambassador. "Mallius in Etruria plebem sollicitare, egestate, simul ac dolore injuriæ, novarum rerum cupidam, quod Sullæ dominatione agros, bonaque omnia amiserat; pretereà latrones cujusque generis, quorum in eâ regione magna copia fuit, &c." It is not improbable however, that the usage now prevailed among the Jews, which Cæsar tells us anciently obtained among the Gauls, for those that were in debt, oppressed by tributes, or the tyranny of the great, to betake themselves to the service of some eminent man for protection; by him they were maintained, and to him they devoted themselves, under a solemn obligation to live and die with him. These were called in the Gallic language *Soldurii*, from whence the word *soldier* is derived; and as they might be honest and good men, though they had the misfortune to be in debt, or could not submit to tyrannical treatment, so in all probability David's companions were. *Vid. The Life of David, by the author of Revelation Examined.*

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cord, refugees of all kinds, either through their private wants, or the oppression of their enemies, a disaffection to the government, or a zeal for the next successor, should flock to David : nor was David any ways blameable for receiving them, (a) since we have abundant reason to presume, that he took none under his protection. but such as were forced to flee from Saul's injustice and oppression, nor screened any debtors but such as were under a real inability to satisfy their creditors, and were therefore necessitated either to leave their country, or lose their liberty. The submission and discipline wherein he kept his people, and the high notions of respect and reverence which he always infused into them for the government, and person of the king, are an ample testimony that he meditated no defection or revolt ; and the debtors whom he secured from cruel prosecutions or slavery, he put in a condition to pay their creditors, by leading them against the enemies of Israel, from whom, in several expeditions, they returned laden with rich spoils.

There is one part, however, of David's conduct that cannot so well be vindicated ; and that is, what passed between him and Achish, upon his second retreat to his court. We may suppose indeed, that during this interval, an alliance was made between Achish and him, (though the sacred historian makes no mention of it), and that this new ally, hearing how violently Saul persecuted him, might, in hopes of making the breach wider, and of exasperating David against him, voluntarily invite him into his dominions ; but certainly we cannot but say that David should by no means have gone. God had expressly commanded him by his prophet to return into the tribe of Judah, and at the same time gave him assurance, that he would be his safeguard and protector : It was therefore an apparent diffidence of God's providence, which had been so long employed in his preservation, to make an enemy's country the place of his refuge ; and a breach it was of truth and fidelity to his new ally, to make him believe, that he was fighting against his foes, when all the while he was destroying his confederates.

But what can we say for his conduct, when he joins forces with the enemies of his country, takes the field with them, promises to act offensively, and looks upon it as a kind of slight and indignity to be dismissed ? (b) " What have I done (says he to Achish) that I may not go fight against the enemies of my lord the king ?" One would really suspect, by his asking the question, that he had an intention not unlike that of the famous Marcius Coriolanus, who, to revenge himself of the ingratitude of his country, joined with the Volsci to destroy it. But if his intention was either to stand neuter, or to turn against the Philistines in the day of battle, his perfidy and ingratitude to Achish must be open and conspicuous.

In short, how well soever we may wish to David's character, there is no vindicating his conduct in this particular. Which party soever he had taken, he must have been culpable ; and one party he must have taken, had not Providence so timely interposed to preserve his honour without injuring his conscience. However, if we would suppose any thing in extenuation of his fault, we must represent to ourselves a fugitive pursued by a formidable enemy, and every moment in danger of falling into his hands ; this fugitive, kindly received at a foreign court, and protected by a prince that was in hostility with his persecutor ; this prince expecting of his refugee, in consideration of the favours he had conferred on him, that he should attend him to the war, and espouse his cause against their common enemy ; and all this while the other, bound in gratitude not to be uncivil, and considering the dangerous situation of his own affairs, not daring to discover his real purposes : If we imagine this, I say, we must allow, that it, in any case, what they call a finesse in policy were allowable, it was in this of David's, when he had unhappily brought himself into these circumstances.

It may seem a little strange perhaps that David, who in these and several other grosser instances, could not but be culpable in the eyes of God, should, nevertheless, be styled

(a) *Calmet's Comment.* in 1 Sam. xxii. 2.

(b) 1 Sam. xxix. 8.

led in Scripture (a) “the man after his own heart:” But whoever observes the occasion of that expression, will find that it ought to be taken in a comparative sense only, and in derogation indeed to Saul, whose transgression in sparing Amalek, the prophet Samuel was then reproving; that, in executing his decrees upon the idolatrous nations round about him, David would be more punctual and not so remiss as Saul had been; and, in this respect, would conform to the Divine will, or be “the man after God’s own heart.” [The great purpose for which the children of Israel were separated from the nations around them, was to preserve in the world the knowledge of the Divine unity, and to wage perpetual war with idolatry and polytheism. It was to keep them separate that the ceremonial law was instituted, and that they were commanded to exterminate the incorrigible idolaters of Canaan; and therefore a zeal for the law and for all its objects must have been the chief virtue of a king of Israel, for much the same reason that chastity is the chief of female virtues. Other sins of themselves may be of a deeper dye when considered abstractly; but as a disregard to the virtue of chastity is the only vice which utterly disqualifies women for the purpose for which they were created, so a disregard of those laws which related to idolatry was the only vice which could render a man wholly unfit to be a ruler of Israel. From this vice David was at all times free. As a king of Israel, therefore, he was *a man after God’s own heart*; for, though in the matter of Uriah he certainly *gave occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme*, he never fell into idolatry himself, gave countenance to it in others, or hesitated to execute the Divine judgments against it.] This is undoubtedly the sense in which the words ought to be understood, though the common solution, viz. that though David was a great and grievous sinner, yet the severity of his repentance cleared him in the sight of God, and made an amends for the enormity of his transgressions, be not much amiss.

It cannot however with justice be said, that David was any ways culpable in sparing the life of Saul, even when Providence seems to have put it in his hand. This trial God made of his virtue and clemency; and a glorious conquest it was, not only to overcome his own resentments, which were justly enough founded against Saul, but the arguments and instigations likewise of those about him; (b) “Behold the day, of which the Lord said unto thee, Behold I will deliver thine enemy into thine hand, that thou mayest do to him as it shall seem good unto thee.” God had delivered him into his hand indeed, but had given him no order or permission to slay Saul. (c) He had promised him the kingdom likewise, but would, by no means, allow him to ascend the throne by blood. His title to the succession was real and incontestible, but not allowed to be put in force, or himself to attempt by ways of violence the possession of the crown, as long as Saul was permitted by God to reign, and recognised as sovereign by the people. David as yet, being only a private man, had no authority to wage war against Saul; and though it be allowable for any one to defend himself against an unjust aggressor, and to repel force by force, yet this must be done only in order to secure his own life, and not to take away that of his adversary; for what the apostles say of judging, or censuring, is much more forcible in the matter of killing: (d) “Who art thou that judgest another man’s servant? To his own master he standeth or falleth; for there is one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: Who art thou then that judgest another?” And these rules, which ought to be observed by private persons, are much more extensive when they relate to a prince and his subject. The subject is obliged in duty, even though he be innocent, to bear patiently the ill treatment of his prince. David, no doubt, was conscious of his own integrity, but, were it not for the preceding promises of God in his favour, and the orders which from time to time he received from

(a) 1 Sam. xiii. 14. and xv. 24.
in 1 Sam. xxiv. 4.

(b) Ibid. xxi. 4.
(d) Rom. xiv. 4. and Jam. iv. 12

(c) Calmet’s Comment.

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the high priest's oracle, it would not be so easy a matter to justify some part of his conduct. His fleeing from his country, inlisting men, and putting himself in a condition of defence, would, even under our mild government, be looked upon as seditious and rebellious proceedings: And therefore we may suppose that David himself might not have so favourable an opinion of the course of life he was compelled at that time to follow; might think that he gave some umbrage to Saul's jealousy and suspicion of him; and might thereupon be the more inclinable to excuse the violence of his persecution, and to make no other use of the advantages he had against him than to demonstrate his own innocence, and the groundlessness of the other's suspicions; for such seems to be the sense of his own words. (a) "Wherefore doth my lord thus pursue after his servant? For what have I done, or what evil is in my hand? Wherefore hearest thou mens words, saying, David seeketh thy hurt? Behold this day thine eyes have seen how the Lord had delivered thee into mine hand in the cave, but mine eye spared thee; therefore cursed be they before the Lord who make this difference betwixt us; for they have driven me out this day from abiding in the inheritance of the Lord:" For herein he not only pleads his own innocence and good intentions towards the king, but, in some measure, excuses the king's conduct towards him, as being under the influence of evil counsellors, which both imposed upon the king's credulity, and compelled him to such a method of life as was far from being agreeable to his interest or inclination.

Upon many accounts, therefore, it was an act of his great and generous soul for David to spare the life of his severest enemy: but though we cannot, in like manner, justify his indignation against Nabal, and the oath which he swore to destroy his whole family; yet something may be offered in excuse of it, if we attend a little to what occasioned it, and the too common effect which such treatment (as Nabal's was) is apt to have upon such spirits as we may suppose David's to have been. David, while he continued in the wilderness of Paran, had given his men charge, not only to do no injury to Nabal's shepherds and herdsmen, but even to protect and assist them in case they were invaded by any of the neighbouring Arabians: and now, that their master was shearing his sheep (which was always a festival season) not far from the place where David was encamped, to shew him the greater respect, he sent no less than ten young men of his company to make his compliments to him, and, in the most civil manner, to request something of him (as it was the custom to be generous and liberal at such a time as that) for the relief of himself and his followers, in this form: (b) "Peace be to thee," (as the young mens instructions were) "and peace be to thine house, and peace be unto all thou hast." Peace, in the sacred language, comprehends all manner of blessings, both spiritual and temporal; and therefore an higher compliment, (as we say) or a more affectionate salutation, could not have been devised. "And now I have heard that thou hast shearers; and thy shepherds which were with us, we hurt them not, neither was there ought missing unto them all the while that they were in Carmel:" a sufficient argument, one would think, to engage Nabal's grateful acknowledgment; because it certainly was a matter of no small courtesy, for a body of men in arms, and in want of the common necessities of life, not to take by violence what they could not be hindered from. Such men claim a kind of licence to do injuries with impunity, and therefore it ought to be deemed a great favour when they do them not. David and his men, however, are so far from magnifying their services to Nabal, that they only say, (c) "they did them no hurt;" whereas his own servants acknowledge, "that they were a defence, and a wall to them, both by night and by day, all the while that they were with them keeping sheep." Upon this presumption, the matter of their request was,—“Let the young men find favour in thine eyes; (for we come in a good day) give, I pray thee, whatsoever cometh unto thine hand unto thy servants, and thy son David.” Words

(a) 1 Sam. xxiv. 9, 10.

(b) Ibid. xxv. 6, &c.

(c) Ibid. ver. 16.

can hardly be invented more full of respect and humility ; (a) for he pays a deference to Nabal, either upon the account of his seniority, or descent from the same tribe, and desires no rarities, no delicacies, but any thing that first came to hand, and what he could most conveniently spare. From 1 Sam. i. to the end

Nabal (as we just now hinted) was of the same tribe with David, and could not therefore be supposed ignorant either of his exploits, in defence of his country, or of the true cause of Saul's indignation against him ; and yet, observe the rudeness and insolence of his answer to such a civil message and humble request : (b) " Who is David, and who is the son of Jesse ? There are many servants, now-a-days, that break every man from his master. Shall I take the provisions I have made for my shearers, and give them unto men whom I know not whence they are ? " Nothing certainly could be more provoking than such an answer as this. The charging David with being a vagabond, and rebel to his prince, was a reproach insufferable to a man of a liberal spirit, who knew himself innocent ; and therefore no wonder that David, upon the report of the messengers, who were themselves brought under the same predicament, and therefore had no reason to alleviate matters, was resolved, in his passion, to be revenged upon Nabal. For (c) there were four things in the matter before us that seem to have inflamed his resentment, and put him upon this sanguinary design : 1st, The want which both he and his companions at present laboured under, but hoped to have relieved out of the abundance of a wealthy man, who might easily have done it without hurting himself ; 2dly, The deception he was under in finding no compensation made him for the care which he and his people had taken of Nabal's cattle, though perhaps he had given them his word and assurance, that something of this kind would be done ; 3dly, The resentment which easily rises in the breast of any generous man, when, instead of thanks, and a grateful acknowledgment, he meets with contumely and opprobrious language ; and, 4thly, The vexation which an innocent man, conscious of his own merits, and the services he had done his king and country, must necessarily feel, when he perceives himself vilified and treated as a scoundrel. (d) Fugitive and slave are imputations of the grossest nature ; and, when retorted by an ungrateful person upon his guardian and benefactor, are provocations past bearing.

Any one of these things singly was enough to irritate a man of a lofty spirit ; but all put together could hardly fail of inflaming the mind to such a degree as to make him lose the government of his passion, and fall into the most vindictive rage, which is generally more observable in military men, whose courage and spirits run high, and, being too much accustomed to blood and slaughter, even in lawful wars, have not that dread and abhorrence of cruel and outrageous executions as the rest of mankind have who live more retired and peaceable lives.

It was to the sudden transport of David's passion then, and perhaps that exasperated by the instigations of his own men, that we are to impute his vow, and design of destroying Nabal's family ; and though in this we cannot commend him, yet certainly there is something praise-worthy in his speedy reconciliation, upon Abigail's first address and application to him in the room of her husband : (e) " Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, which sent thee this day to meet me ; and blessed be thy advice, and blessed be thou, which hast kept me this day from coming to shed blood, and from avenging myself with my own hand. " (f) " In a word, the resolution against Nabal (as one elegantly expresses it) was the resolution of a mortal, not to say a military man, too much injured and provoked, and urged by necessity and self-preservation ; the change and

(a) *Patrick's and Calmet's Commentaries.*
Comment. in locum.

(b) 1 Sam. xxv. 10, 11.
(d) *The Life of King David.*

(c) *Le Clerc's*
(e) 1 Sam. xxv. 32, 33.

(f) *The Life of King David.*

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the thanksgiving upon being averted from evil, were the sentiments of an hero and a saint."

The Jews indeed (as we quoted the objection from Josephus) give us an high commendation of Saul, and seem to prefer him before David himself in regard to the magnanimity of his death. But it is much to be questioned, whether self-murder (which was certainly Saul's case) be an act of magnanimity or not. For, besides that the laws of all nations have condemned it as abhorrent to the dictates of nature and reason, of self-love and self-preservation; the wisest of the heathen world ever looked upon it as an instance of madness and brutality, and, with great wisdom, have concluded, that such an action is so far from savouring of true courage and generosity, that * it is the sure effect of a weak and pusillanimous temper of mind; since true greatness of soul (as they justly argue) consists in supporting the evils of adversity, and not in shifting them off, which is a mark of a poor impatient spirit, sinking under the common calamities of life, and not knowing how to bear the blows of bad fortune. (a) "Draw thy sword, and thrust me through therewith, lest the uncircumcised come and mock, or abuse me," *² was the request which Saul made to his armour-bearer, and shews that it was not bravery and courage, but the fear of insults, and a conscious inability to bear them with a becoming superiority of mind, that made him shun the storm, when he saw it approaching, by withdrawing from the stage of life.

Saul's case indeed was very dolorous, but he had not therefore any authority to destroy himself. His life was a sacred depositum of God's, and not to be taken away without invading his right, and violating his laws at the same time. For, whatever some may think of the silence of the Scripture concerning self-murder, there is no question to be made, but that it is included in the sixth commandment, under which Saul then lived. (b) The commandment forbids murder in general; and it is certainly as much murder to kill ourselves as to kill another man: And the reason which the Scripture gives, why we are not allowed to do it in both cases, is the same, because (c) "in the image of God made he man." For if I must not shed the blood of another because he is made in the image of God, I must not shed the blood of mine own self, because I also am a man, and made in the image of God as well as he. The reason therefore why we have not more frequent prohibitions against this sin, is plainly this,—(d) That what ever sins or offences God, as a lawgiver, prohibits, he prohibits with a penalty, i. e. he affixes such a punishment to such a crime, and he who commits the crime is to undergo the punishment in this world, whether it be restitution, loss of limb, or loss of life itself. But now this can never happen in the case of self-murder, because self-murder prevents all punishment, (the man being dead before any cognizance can be taken of his offence) and therefore prevents all laws concerning it; and can, consequently, only be included under general commands, and forbidden as a sin, whereof God alone can take cognizance in the world to come.

Since, upon the whole then, Saul may be said to have died in an act of cowardice,

* Si rationem rectè consulas, non vera animi magnitudo nominatur, ubi quisque, non valendo tolerare vel quæque aspera, vel aliena peccata, seipsum interemerit: Magis enim mens infirma deprehenditur, quæ ferre non potest vel duram sui corporis servitutem, vel stultam vulgi opinionem; majorque animus meritò dicendus, qui vitam ærumnosam magis potest ferre, quam fugere. Aug. de Civit. Dei, lib. i. c. 22. And to the same purpose is that in an heathen author:

Rebus in angustis facile est contemnere vitam:

Fortiter ille facit, qui miser esse potest.

Mart. Epig.

Even Seneca, notwithstanding the principles of his

sect, and the example of its founder, says—Morbum, morte, non fugiam, duntaxat sanabilem, nec officientem animo. Non afferam mihi manus propter dolorem: sic mori vinci est. *Epist. 58. Ed. Lips.*

(a) 1 Sam. xxxi. 4.

*² How much nobler was that resolution of Darius, who, finding himself betrayed, and that he was either to be murdered by his own subjects, or delivered into the hands of Alexander, would not however be his own executioner. "I had rather," says he, "die by another's guilt than my own." *Curt. lib. v. c. 12.*

(b) *Fleetwood* against Self-murder.

(c) Gen. ix. 6.

(d) *Fleetwood*, *ibid.*

and in the violation of God's law, whereof he had no space to repent; it has been a matter of some enquiry, what we are to think of his salvation. The Scripture indeed tells us, that (a) "Saul died for his transgression which he committed against the Lord, and also for asking counsel of one who had a familiar spirit, to enquire of it, and enquired not of the Lord, and therefore the Lord slew him:" But it is doing a manifest violence to the sense of these words, to apply them (as some have done) to his final perdition, when they plainly relate to no more than his temporal death. The dangerous and destructive nature of self-murder is, that it makes repentance (the only revealed condition of man's salvation) impossible; but then we are to know, that, in that inexhaustible fountain of goodness, there may be some uncovenanted mercy, some sovereign and prerogative grace, that may make favourable allowances for the distraction of mens thoughts or passions, the violence of their fears or troubles, or the over-bearing weight of any other temptation.

But (to determine this question more peremptorily) though it certainly be consonant to the mercy and goodness of God, to think, that no man shall answer for any miscarriage, which is wholly occasioned by the power of a disease, or the distraction of the brain, because whatever is committed in such a case is not the man's free act, and consequently cannot be his guilt; yet we have no reason to presume, that the case is not so with those, who, out of pride or haughtiness, fear of miseries to come, or impatience under present sufferings, distrust of God's providence, or despair of his mercy, lay violent hands upon themselves; because the act was both voluntary and vicious, and not to be amended by repentance: But without limiting thy goodness, O Lord, unto thy mercy we commit their souls!

Thus we have endeavoured to satisfy most of the popular objections which have been raised against several facts occurring in the first book of Samuel; and for the farther confirmation hereof, we shall only instance in one or two ancient traditions among the heathens, which, in all probability, derived their original from this part of Sacred History. The Scythians, upon their return out of Egypt, passing through the country of the Philistines, robbed the temple of Venus at Askelon, and for their punishment (as (b) Herodotus tells us) they and their posterity were, for a long while after, afflicted with emerods: Whereupon (c) the learned Prideaux remarks, that the Philistines had till then preserved the memory of what they had formerly suffered on account of the ark of God. The Athenians, when the mysteries of Bacchus were brought out of Bœotia, having not received them with all the pomp and solemnity that the god expected, were smitten (d) with a disease in their secret parts, which resembled the malady of the people of Ashdod, and so did their cure too; for, having consulted the oracle, they were informed, that the way to get rid of their plague, was to offer unto Bacchus golden figures of the part wherein they were afflicted. The Grecians, at the taking of Troy, discovered an ark dedicated to Bacchus, and when Eurypilus (as Pausanias (e) tells us) adventured to open it, he found therein the image of the god, but was immediately deprived of his senses for daring to look into it; which seems to be a plain transcript from the irreverence and fate of the Bethshemites. (f) Clemens Alexandrinus has observed, that the fable of Æacus's praying for rain in a great drought, and when Greece was sadly distressed for want of corn, was borrowed from that part of Samuel's history, where he is said to have called down thunder and rain in the time of wheat-harvest, when the sky was all serene and clear: And therefore we need less wonder at the story between Saul and the witch of Endor, when we read of Circe, Medea, Erichtho, Manto, Antonoë, and several other women, who, in the heathen world, became famous for their necromancy, and of the many votaries that resorted to them; when we find Statius in-

From 1 Sam.
i. to the end

(a) 1 Chron. x. 13, 14. (b) Lib. i. (c) *Connection of the Old and New Testament*, part i. book i. page 44. (d) Vide *Aristoph.* Scholiast. in *Acharn.* Act ii. (e) In *Achaic.* c. xix. pag. 572. (f) *Stromat.* vi.

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roducing Tiresias as raising altars, making libations, and offering sacrifices, * with solemn invocations to the infernal gods; and Homer himself spending a great part of (*a*) one book of his poem, in representing Ulysses as invoking the ghost of this same Tiresias, and attending to the oracles which proceeded from his mouth. These things had their foundation in some early traditions, which at first arose from the facts contained in the Sacred Writings, which are confessedly the most ancient records we have; and, in this respect, are an argument of their veracity, since we find them alluded to by subsequent authors, who had no regard to their authority.

DISSERTATION C.

ON THE DURATION OF THE JEWISH THEOCRACY.

[IT is of much importance to him who would acquire a just notion of the great objects of the several dispensations of God to man, to be well acquainted with the *constitution* of the Jewish state, or that form of government under which the Israelites were placed, when they received the law from the mouth of God at Mount Sinai. That the Supreme Lord of all things condescended then to make them his peculiar people, and thus to become, in the language of that age, not only their *tutelary God*, but also their *civil Sovereign*, is universally admitted, and cannot indeed be denied by any one who reads with attention, and believes their history. With them the civil and religious societies were not, as in every other polished nation, united in the closest *alliance*; they were, in the strictest sense of the words, incorporated into *one society*, so that every act of obedience to the *civil magistrate* was an *immediate act of religion*, and every act of disobedience not barely a *crime*, but a *sin*. This was the consequence of God's having condescended to be their *civil* as well as *religious* Legislator. The form of their government was thus, as Josephus very properly terms it, a *theocracy*, under which *sins* as well as *crimes* were punished, and *piety* and *private virtue*, as well as *public services to the state*, rewarded even in this world. No other government, at least since the earliest ages, has been, or indeed could be, administered in this manner; for no government administered by mere man can either punish or reward any thing but *overt acts*; nor do ordinary civil governments concern themselves with the practice of religious duties or private virtues; farther than those duties and virtues affect the peace of society. Without taking cognisance of these things, however, the civil constitution of the Israelites would not have answered the purpose for which that people was separated from the rest of the world; for, as I have had frequent occasion to observe, their minds in general were too grovelling to have been restrained from the universal propensity to polytheism and idolatry which then prevailed, by any thing but immediate rewards for duties performed, and immediate punishment for impiety and vice.

That this theocratic government continued until the elevation of Saul to the throne is unquestionable. From the death of Joshua to that period, the highest permanent officer in the state as well as in the church was evidently the high priest: and this was the natural consequence of God himself being the Supreme civil Governor of the nation.

* The words of his invocation are these,
Solvite pulsanti loca muta, et inane severæ
Persephones, vulgusque cava sub nocte repostum

Elicite, et plena redeat stygia Portitor alno;
Forte simul gressus, &c.
(*a*) Odyss. xi.

Occasional magistrates were indeed raised up from time to time under the denomination of *judges*; but from their history it appears that their office was rather military than civil; that most of them were employed in leading armies to battle against the oppressors of their country rather than in dispensing justice to the people; that they were raised up by an immediate impulse from heaven and not by the choice of the nation; and that when they were not themselves supernaturally enlightened by the Spirit of God, they were to undertake nothing of importance, either in peace or in war, but by the direction of the high priest, after he had consulted God for them by *Urim*.

From 1 Sam.
i. to the end.

Such was the theocratic government of Israel in the time of the judges; but when towards the end of Samuel's administration the people mutinously demanded a king to reign over them, and God directed the prophet to comply with their request, the general opinion, till very lately, was, and perhaps still is, that the government of Israel ceased to be *theocratic*, and became such a *monarchy* as other civil governments which are administered by one man. Such indeed they wished it to be; for their demand was to "have a king over them, that they also might be like all the nations;" and in this sense their demand was understood both by God and by the prophet. "They have not rejected thee, (said the Lord to Samuel) but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them:" and had their demand been granted to the utmost extent of their wishes, they would very quickly have proceeded to abrogate the law, and to reject Jehovah as their only God.

The magistrate called a king, in those days and in the countries around them, was supreme and absolute. His edicts were laws, which he could enforce, suspend, or abrogate, at his pleasure; but such authority never was possessed by Saul, by David, or by any other king either of Israel or of Judah. All writers on politics have agreed—indeed all men capable of reflection must agree, that in every government there is necessarily a power, from which the constitution has provided no appeal, and which may therefore be termed absolute, omnipotent, and uncontrollable; but this power can be nothing else than the legislature; and where the right of enacting and executing the laws is vested in different bodies, the government is more or less free according to circumstances. The sole Legislator of Israel was God; and therefore as the kings could neither enact a new law nor repeal an old one, the government continued to be a theocracy, as well under their permanent administration, as it was under the occasional administration of the judges; and the only difference that we can discover between the two species of government, is, that the conduct of the judges was generally directed by *Urim*, and that of the kings either by the *inspiration* of God vouchsafed to *themselves*, or by *prophets* raised up from time to time to reclaim them when deviating from their duty as laid down by the law. That the theocracy ended not with the judges, has been proved by Bishop Warburton in so masterly a manner, that I should do my reader injustice, were I not to lay before him an abstract of that learned and ingenious prelate's reasoning on the subject.

1. "Though the people's purpose, in their clamours for a king, was indeed to live under a Gentile monarchy, like their idolatrous neighbours; yet in compassion to their blindness, God, in this instance, as in many others, indulged their prejudices, without exposing them to the fatal consequences of their project; which, if complied with in the sense in which they had formed it, would have been a withdrawing from them of his *extraordinary Providence*, at a time when they could not support themselves without it. He therefore gave them a *king*; but such a one as was only his VICEROY or DEPUTY; and who, on that account, was not left to the people's election, but chosen by himself, and chosen for life, which it does not appear that all the judges were.

2. "This king had an unlimited *executive* power, as God's viceroy must needs have;" for which he was amenable, not to the people but to God alone, whom David therefore repeatedly calls his *own King* as well as the King of Israel.

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3. "He had no *legislative* authority, which every king then had, but which no viceroy could possibly have. David and Solomon indeed appointed the courses of the priests; but the latter is said to have done so according to the order of the former, who is expressly styled (a) 'the man of God,' who therefore acted under the direction of the Holy Spirit.

4. "The king was placed and displaced by God at pleasure, of which, as viceroy, we see the perfect fitness; but as sovereign, by the people's choice or by any other right, we cannot easily account for. No doubt God is by inherent right the sovereign disposer of all things both in heaven and in earth; but in the establishing of the government of Israel, he appears to have treated with that people, as men equally independent treat with each other, and to have left it at first to their own option, whether they would have *himself* for their *King*.

5. "The very same punishment was ordained for cursing the king as for blaspheming God, namely, stoning to death; and the reason is intimated in these words of Abishai to David—Shall not Shimei be put to death for this, because he cursed the LORD'S ANOINTED? the common title of the kings of Israel and Judah.

6. "The throne and kingdom of Judea is all along expressly declared to be *God's throne and God's kingdom*. Thus in the first book of Chronicles, it is said, that *Solomon sat on the THRONE OF THE LORD as king, instead of David his father*. And the queen of Sheba, who had doubtless been informed by Solomon of the true nature of his kingdom, compliments him in these words—*Blessed be the Lord thy God, which delighted in thee to set thee on HIS THRONE, TO BE KING FOR THE LORD THY GOD*. In like manner Ahijah says to the house of Israel, on their defection from Rehoboam; and now ye think to with-stand the KINGDOM OF THE LORD in the hands of the sons of David (b).

7. "The penal laws against idolatry were still in force during their kings, and put in execution by their best rulers; which alone is a demonstration of the subsistence of the theocracy; because such laws would be absolutely unjust under any other form of government (c).

8. "It appears that a certain degree of inspiration was vouchsafed to their several kings, or at least to the first of each dynasty of kings, to enable them to discharge properly the duties of God's vicegerents, and that this gift was not withdrawn till they were rejected from their high office, or had rendered themselves unworthy of it. Thus, when Saul was anointed to be 'captain over the LORD'S inheritance, as soon as he had turned his back to go from Samuel, God gave him another heart, and turned him into a new man,' (d) to qualify him, as Bishop Patrick observes, for the government of his people; but when he had rendered himself, by his rebellions against his Divine Sovereign, unworthy of the office, that Spirit was withdrawn from him, and conferred on David who was anointed to succeed him (e). In like manner, when Solomon succeeded to the kingdom, God bestowed on him 'a wise and understanding heart to enable him to govern and judge the people,' who are expressly called—not Solomon's—but God's people (f).

It is justly observed by Warburton, that had the people's demand of a king been complied with in the sense and to the extent that they meant it, the equal and extraordinary Providence rewarding piety and virtue in this world, and punishing idolatry and vice, must have been withdrawn from them; and that they could not then have supported themselves under an ordinary Providence, in which "all things here come alike to all," surrounded as they were by exasperated enemies more powerful than themselves. But it is of more importance perhaps to consider the equal and extraordinary Providence as necessary, at that period, and long afterwards, to check their propensities

(a) 2 Chron. viii. 14.
(d) 1 Sam. x. 1—10.

(b) Ibid. ix. 8.
(e) Ibid. xvi. 13, 14.

(c) Div. Leg. book v. sect. iii.
(f) 2 Sam. iii. 5—15.

to idolatry, and to prepare them gradually for the reception of that future Messiah, promised to their forefathers, in whom all the nations of the earth were to be blessed. From 1 Sam. i. to the end A long succession of prophets was accordingly sent to open up gradually the nature of that dispensation, which Moses had taught them to expect from a prophet to be raised up among them like unto him; and to remove, by little and little, the shadows of their law, as they became more and more able to bear the splendour of the light within. This splendour, however, the nation at large was never fully able to bear; and therefore the extraordinary Providence was never wholly withdrawn from them till some time after their return from their Babylonish captivity, by which they appear to have been completely cured of their propensities to polytheism, and led to turn their attention more steadily to the prospect of that future state, which had been presented to them by some of their later prophets.

During the captivity, Bishop Warburton supposes (a) that the administration of the theocracy lay, as it were, in abeyance; but it appears that the Jews were there permitted to live as far as possible, i. e. to regulate their own private concerns by their own laws; and we are sure, that they were protected, by a miraculous interposition of Providence, from the tyranny of those who attempted to compel them to worship idols or to neglect the worship of their own God (b). On their return to their own country, however, the theocratic government was again administered, as is evident from the declaration of the Almighty, by the prophet Haggai: "Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, saith the Lord; and be strong, O Joshua, son of Josedech the high priest; and be strong all ye people of the land, saith the Lord, and work; for I am with you, saith the Lord of Hosts: ACCORDING TO THE WORD THAT I COVENANTED WITH YOU, WHEN YOU CAME OUT OF EGYPT, SO MY SPIRIT REMAINETH AMONGST YOU: fear ye not (c)." "What was that covenant, asks the Bishop? That Israel should be his people, and he their God and King. It cannot barely mean, that he would be their God, and they should be his people; for this was but *part* of the covenant. Nor can it mean that they should be conducted by an extraordinary Providence, as at their coming out of Egypt, and during the first periods of the theocracy; for this was but *the effect* of the covenant, which soon ceased after their re-establishment in their own country."

Then indeed the extraordinary Providence was wholly withdrawn from the Jews, among whom, as among other nations, there was thenceforth "one event, in this world, to the righteous and to the wicked," whose prosperity or adversity appeared no longer to be the result, as formerly, of their righteousness or their sins. Still, however, their government continued to be a *theocracy*; for they were governed by laws which, as they were given by God, none but God could repeal or change. If then, as all writers on political philosophy agree, every government receives its denomination from the supreme or sovereign power of the state; and if no power can be supreme, but that in which resides the power of legislation, it is obvious, that the government or constitution of the Jewish state continued to be a *theocracy* till the coming of that prophet, who was to be a lawgiver like unto Moses; for none else had, or could have, authority to repeal, or in any way change those laws, which they had received from God by his ministry. Jesus the promised Messiah erected indeed a new and spiritual kingdom to be governed by a new and spiritual law; and proved the Divine origin of that kingdom, by miracles equally numerous and stupendous with those by which the theocracy had been originally established; whilst he completely abolished the Mosaic dispensation, by rendering it impossible to administer even the forms of the theocratic government †.]

(a) *Divine Legation*, book v. sect. 3.

(b) Daniel iii. and vi.

(c) Haggai ii. 4, 5.

† I had written this dissertation, before *Smith's translation of Michaelis's Commentaries on the Mo-*

saiic laws came under my notice. I have now read that work, but see no reason to alter any thing that I have written on the constitution of Judea, although there is hardly a single article in that constitution

DISSERTATION III.

OF SAMUEL'S APPEARING TO SAUL AT THE WITCH OF ENDOR'S.

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&c. or 4301.
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or 1110.

HOW long the profession of necromancy, or the art of raising up the dead, in order to pry into future events, or to be informed of the fate of the living, has obtained in the world, we have no indications from history. We perceive no footsteps of it in the ages before the flood, and yet it is strange, that a people, abandoned to all kind of wickedness in a manner, could keep themselves clear of this: but our account of these times is very short. The first express mention that we meet with of magicians and sorcerers is almost in the beginning of the book of Exodus, where Moses is soliciting the deliverance of the children of Israel out of Egypt; and therefore Egypt, which affected to be the mother of most occult sciences, is supposed to have been the inventress of this. From Egypt it spread itself into the neighbouring countries, and soon infected all the east: for as it undertook to gratify man's inquisitiveness, and superstitious curiosity, it could not long want abettors. From Egypt it is certain that the Israelites brought along with them no small inclination to these detestable practices, and were but too much addicted to them, notwithstanding all the care that the state had taken to suppress them, and the provision which God had made, by establishing a method of consulting him, to prevent their hankering after them.

The injunction of the law is very express.—(a) “When thou art come into the land, which the Lord thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations. There shall not be found among you any that useth divination or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, or a charmer, or a * consulter with familiar spi-

about which the learned professor and I perfectly agree. At the era of his writing, *modern liberty* was the goddess whom his countrymen in general adored; and the consequence is, that he finds the original government of the Israelites to have been not *theocratical* but *republican*, and the kings, or dynasties of kings, when *monarchy* was introduced, to have been appointed, not by God, but by the people!]

(a) Deut. xviii. 9, &c.

* What our English translation makes a “familiar spirit,” the Septuagint and Vulgate render *the spirit of Python*, but the Hebrew calls it *the spirit of Ob*. The word *Ob*, or *Oboth*, in its primary signification, is a *bottle*, or *vessel of leather*, wherein liquors were put; and it is not unlikely that this name was given to witches and wizards, because, when they were in their fits of enthusiasm, they swelled in their bellies like a bottle. The occasion of this swelling is said by some to proceed from a dæmon's entering into the sorceress *per partes genitales*, and so ascending to the bottom of her stomach, from whence, at that time, she uttered her predictions; and for this reason the Latins call such persons *ventriloqui*, and the Greeks *Εγγαστριμύθοι*, i. e. *people who speak out of their bellies*. That there have been such people as these, might be

shewn by several examples both in ancient and modern history; but at present, we shall content ourselves with one taken from Cælius Rhodiginus, (Lecti. Antiq. lib. 8. c. 10.) His words are to this effect:—“While I am writing, says he, concerning ventriloquous persons, there is, in my own country, a woman of a mean extract, who has an unclean spirit in her belly, from whence may be heard a voice, not very strong indeed, but very articulate and intelligible. Multitudes of people have heard this voice, as well as myself, and all imaginable precaution has been used in examining into the truth of this fact: ‘Quando futuri avida portentus mens, sæpe accersitum ventriloquum, ac exutum amictu, nequid fraudis occultaret, inspectare et audire concupivit.’ This demon (as our author adds) is called *Cincinnatiulus*, and when the woman calls upon him by his name, he immediately answers her.” In like manner several ancient writers have informed us, that in the times of Paganism, evil spirits had communion with these *ventriloquæ per partes secretiores*; but at present, we shall only take notice of a remarkable passage in St Chrysostom, which we chuse to give the reader in Latin: “Traditur Pythia fœmina fuisse, que in Tripodes sedens expansa malignum spiritum per interna immissum, et

rits, or a wizard, or a necromancer; for all that do these things are an abomination to the Lord :” And therefore their punishment was this :—(a) “ A man, or a woman, that hath a familiar spirit, or that is a wizard, shall surely be put to death. Thou shalt stone them with stones, their blood shall be upon them.” Nor was it only the practisers of such vile arts, but those likewise that resorted to them upon any occasion, were liable to the same punishment; for (b) “ the soul that turneth after such as have familiar spirits, and after wizards, to go a-whoring after them, I will even set my face against that soul, and will cut him off from among his people, saith the Lord.”

From 1 Sam.
i. to the end.

Such was the severity of the Jewish laws against those who either practised, or encouraged, any manner of magical arts; and it must be said in Saul’s commendation, that he had put the laws in execution against such vile people; he had destroyed and drove away (c) “ those that had familiar spirits, and the wizards out of the land;” and yet, (observe the weakness as well as the wickedness of the man!) when himself fell into distress, and had abundant reason to believe that God had forsaken him, he flees to one of these creatures for relief, and requests of her to raise up his old friend Samuel, as expecting very probably some advice from him: But whether this was really done or no, or if done, in what manner it was effected, are points that have so much exercised the heads and pens, both of ancient and modern, both of Jewish and Christian writers, that little or nothing new can be said upon them; and therefore all that I shall endeavour to do, will be to reduce their several sentiments into as narrow a compass, and to state them in as fair a light, as I can, by enquiring into these three particulars.

1. Whether there was a real apparition.
2. What this apparition (if real) was: and,
3. By what means, and for what purposes, it was effected.

1. It cannot be denied indeed, but that those who explode the reality of the apparition, and make it to be all nothing but a cheat and juggle of the sorceress, have found out some arguments that at first sight make a tolerable appearance. They tell us, (d) that the sacred history never once makes mention of Saul’s seeing Samuel with his own eyes. It informs us indeed, that Saul knew him by the description which the woman gave, and that he held for some considerable time a conversation with him; but since it is nowhere said that he really saw him, “ Why might not the woman counterfeit a voice, and pretend it was Samuel’s? when Saul asked her to * raise him up Samuel, i. e. to disturb

per genitales partes subeuntem excipiens, furore repleteretur, ipsaque resolutis crinibus baccharetur, ex ore spumam emittens, et sic furoris verba loquebatur, &c.” *Saurin*, vol. 4. dissert. 36.

(a) Lev. xx. 27.

(b) Ibid. ver. 6.

(c) 1 Sam. xxviii. 3.

(d) *Scot and Webster* upon Witchcraft.

* What forms of enchantment were anciently used in the practice of necromancy, we are at a loss to know, because we read of none that the Pythoness of Endor employed; but this might probably happen, because the ghost of Samuel came upon her sooner than she expected, and before she had begun her incantations. That however there were several rites, spells, and invocations used upon these occasions, we may learn from almost every ancient author, but from none more particularly than from Lucan, who brings in Erictho animating a dead body, in order to tell young Pompey the fate of the civil war. The ceremonies she uses for this purpose are thus described by our excellent translator of that poet:

This said: she runs the mangled carcase o’er,
And wipes from every wound the crusty gore;

Now with hot blood the frozen breast she warms,
And with strong lunar dews confirms her charms.
Anon she mingles ev’ry monstrous birth,
Which nature, wayward and perverse, brings forth
Nor intrails of the spotted lynx she lacks,
Nor bony joints from fell hyænas backs;
Nor deers hot marrow, rich with snaky blood,
Nor foam of raging dogs, that fly the flood:
Her store the tardy Remora supplies,
With stones from eagles warm, and dragons eyes;
Snakes, that on pinions cut their airy way,
And nimbly o’er Arabian deserts prey, &c.
To these she joins dire drugs without a name,
A thousand poisons never known to fame;
Herbs, o’er whose leaves the hag her spells had
sung,

And wet with cursed spittle, as they sprung.

With every other mischief most abhorr’d,

Which hell, or worse Erictho could afford.

Having thus prepared the body, she makes her invocation in these words:

Ye furies! and thou black accursed hell!

Ye woes, in which the damn’d for ever dwell!

A. M. 2888,
&c. or 4301.
Ant. Chris.
1116, &c.
or 1110.

the ghost of so great a prophet, she might think he was no common man ; and when (a) he swore unto her by the Lord, that he would defend her from all danger, he gave her intimation enough that he was the king. (b) The crafty woman therefore having picked up the knowledge of this, might retire into her closet or cell, and there having her familiar, i. e. some cunning artful man, to make proper responses in a different voice, might easily impose upon one who was distracted with anxious thoughts, and had already shewn sufficient credulity, in thinking there was any efficacy in magical operations to evocate the dead.

“ The controversy between Saul and David every one knew ; nor was it now become a secret, that the crown was to devolve upon the latter ; and therefore that part of the discourse which passed between Saul and Samuel, any man of a common genius might have hit off without much difficulty. Endor was not so far distant from Gilboa or Shunem, but that the condition of the two armies might easily be known, and that the Philistines were superior both in courage and numbers ; and therefore his respondent, without all peradventure, might prognosticate Saul’s defeat ; and though there was some hazard in the last conjecture, viz. that he and his sons would die in battle ; yet there was this advantage on the side of the guess, that they were all men of known and experienced valour, who would rather sacrifice their lives than turn their backs upon their enemies.” Upon the whole therefore, the maintainers of this hypothesis conclude, that as there is no reason, so there was no necessity for any miraculous interposition in this affair, since this is no more than what any common gipsy, with another in confederacy to assist her, might do to any credulous person, who came to consult her.

They who undertake to oppose this opinion, lay it down for a good rule in the interpretation of Scripture,—That we should, as far as we can, adhere to the primary sense of the words, and never have recourse to any foreign or singular explication, but where the literal is inconsistent either with the dictates of right reason or the analogy of faith. Let any indifferent person then, say they, take into his hand the account of Saul’s consulting this sorceress, and upon the first reading it, he must confess, that the notion which it conveys to his mind is that of a real apparition ; and since the passages that both precede and follow it, are confessedly to be taken in their most obvious meaning, why should a strange and forced construction be put upon this ? (c) Have we not as much reason to entertain a good opinion of the author of this history, his ability, his integrity, his knowledge of what he wrote about, and his undesigning to deceive us, as we can have of any critic or commentator upon it ; and therefore, when he gives us to understand that the woman saw Samuel, upon what presumption are we led to disbelieve it ? Saul and his companions might possibly be deceived by an impostor in Samuel’s guise ; but was the sacred historian therefore deceived, or did he mean to deceive us, when he gives us this plain account of an apparition ? Saul was a bold man, and too sagacious to become a dupe to a silly woman. He and his two attendants came upon her by night, and before she was prepared to act any juggle or imposture. They were too well acquainted with the voice, and stature, and figure of Samuel, for any other to personate him, without being detected. But admitting the cheat passed up-

Chaos, the world’s and form’s eternal foe !
And thou sole arbiter of all below,
Pluto ! whom ruthless fates a god ordain,
And doom to immortality of pain.
Ye fair Elysian mansions of the blest,
Where no Thessalian charmer hopes to rest !
Styx ! and Persephone, compell’d to fly
Thy fruitful mother, and the chearfull sky !
Third Hecate ! by whom my whispers breathe
My secret purpose to the shades beneath !
Thou greedy dog, who at the infernal gate,

In everlasting hunger still must wait !
And thou, old Charon, horrible and hoar !
For ever lab’ring back from shore to shore, &c.
Hear all ye powers ! if e’er your hell rejoice
In the lov’d horrors of this impious voice, &c.
Hear, and obey, &c. *Pharsalia*, lib. vi.
(a) 1 Sam. xxviii. 10.
(b) Vid. *Le Clerc’s* Comment. in 1 Sam. xxviii. passim. (c) *The History of the Life of King David*, Vol. i.

on them, how can we think but that the author of this account, who pretends to relate the transaction as it really happened, and is supposed to have wrote by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, would, in some measure, have let us into the secret of this imposture? His business doubtless was to expose such practices, as far as truth would allow; and therefore it is unaccountable (unless he meant to delude us with a false persuasion) that he should omit every thing that tended to discover the fraud, and in his narration insert every thing that tended to confirm the reality of the prophet's appearance.

From 1. Sam.
i. to the end

(a) That spirits of another world may assume such vehicles as may admit them to a sensible commerce with us, in like manner as our spirits are clothed with these bodies of ours, the best philosophy will admit; and that they have done so upon extraordinary occasions, (b) the appearance of Moses and Elias, and their conversing with our Saviour on the mount, do abundantly testify. And therefore if God, for wise reasons of his Providence, thought fit either to appoint, or permit Samuel to appear to Saul upon this occasion, there seems to be no more difficulty in the thing, than his appearing to him at any other time while he was alive, and subsisting in the world: For Saul saw his spirit then no more than he did now, and his spirit was every whit as able to bear a body as it was then.

It is owned indeed, that, according to the series of the narration, Saul did not see the apparition (be it what it will) so soon as the woman did, because probably the woman's body, or some other object, might interpose between him and the first appearance; or perhaps, because the vehicle, which Samuel assumed upon this occasion, was not, as yet, condensed enough to be visible to Saul, though it was to the woman: But that he did actually see him is manifest, because when he perceived (which word in the original signifies seeing so as to be assured of our object) "that it was Samuel, † he stooped with his face to the ground, and bowed himself;" which a man is not apt to do to bare ideas or imaginations.

Persons of this woman's character, who are under the displeasure of the government, generally affect obscurity, live privately, and are little acquainted with affairs of state: But suppose her to have been never so great a politician, and never so intimate with what had passed between Saul and Samuel heretofore, never so well assured that God had rejected him, and elected David in his stead; yet how could she come to the knowledge of this, viz. That the battle should be fought the next day, the Israelites be routed, Saul and his sons slain, and their spoils fall into the enemy's hands; since each of these events (even in the present situation of Saul's affairs) were highly casual and uncertain? For might not this prince lose a battle without losing his life? Or, if he himself fell in the action, why must his three sons be all cut off in the same day? Whatever demonstrations of innate bravery he had given in times past, after such severe menaces as he now received from the apparition; prudence, one would think, would have put him upon providing for his safety, either by chicaning with the enemy, or retiring from the field of battle, without going to expose himself, his sons, and his whole army,

(a) *The History of the Life of King David*, vol. i.

(b) Matth. xvii. 3.

† That Saul's stooping to the ground, and bowing himself, was a certain indication of his seeing Samuel, is apparent from several expressions of the same nature in the Sacred History. Thus, when Jacob met Esau, the text tells us, that the "handmaids, and Leah, and Rachel, and their children, bowed themselves," Gen. xxxiii. 2. When David arose out of his hiding-place, upon the signal that Jonathan gave him, the text tells us, that "he fell with his face to the ground, and bowed himself," 1 Sam. xx. 41.

And when the messenger from Saul's camp came to David at Ziklag, the text tells us, that "he fell to the earth and did obeisance," 2 Sam. xiv. 4. But the text takes no notice, either of the messenger's seeing David, or David's seeing Jonathan, or Jacob's family seeing Esau. This is sufficiently implied in their making their obeisance to them; because it is incongruous to suppose, that any would bow and shew other tokens of outward reverence and respect to persons they did not see. *The History of the Life of King David*, vol. i.

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to certain and inevitable death. These are things which no human penetration could reach, and which only he, who is the absolute and Almighty Ruler of all causes and events, could either foresee or foretel: And how unlikely is it, that God Almighty should make use of this sorceress (a) as a prophetess, and give her the honour of revealing his counsels, when, at the same time, he concurred with her in the imposition put upon Saul, by making him believe that Samuel appeared and talked, when there was no Samuel there?

But the truth is, those menacing predictions, how proper soever for a messenger sent from God to utter, were highly imprudent, either in this witch's or her accomplice's mouth: For, since they knew nothing of futurity, and were, at the best, but put to conjecture, it is much more reasonable to believe, that at such a juncture as this, (b) they would have bethought themselves of flattering the king, and giving him comfort, and promising success, and not of thundering out such comminations against him, as might probably incense him, but could do themselves no good. They could not but know that the temper of most kings is to hate to hear shocking truths, and to receive with the utmost despite those that bring them ill news: And therefore it is natural to suppose, that had these threatening replies been of the woman's or her confederate's forming, they would have given them quite another turn, and not run the hazard of disobliging the king to no purpose, by laying an additional load of trouble upon him. In short, (c) the whole tenor of Samuel's speech to king Saul is too rough and ungrateful, too grave and solemn, I may add also, too full of truth and reality, ever to have proceeded from their contrivance and invention only.

The woman, by her courteous entertainment of Saul, seems to be a person of no bad nature; and therefore if she had an accomplice, who understood to make the most of his profession, his business at this time must have been to soothe and cajole the king, which would have both put money in his pocket, and saved the credit of his predictions. For had he foretold him of success and victory, and a happy issue out of all his troubles, he and the woman had been sure of reputation, as well as farther rewards in case it had happened to prove so; and if it had not, (since no one was privy to their communion) the falsehood of the prediction, upon Saul's defeat and death, must in course have been buried with him.

From these reasons then we may infer, that the woman, in this transaction, did not impose upon Saul, since he had a plain sight of the apparition: What the apparition foretold him was above human penetration; and (upon the supposition of a juggle) the witch and her confederate would have certainly acted clean contrary to what they did. And so to the next

2. Enquiry meets us, namely, What this apparition was? Some of the ancient doctors, both of the Jewish and Christian church, have made an evil angel the subject of this apparition, in pure regard to the honour of God. "God (say they) had sufficiently declared his hatred against necromancy, and all kinds of witchcraft, in the severe laws which he enacted against them; but it is certainly denying himself, and cancelling his own work, to seem in the least to countenance or abet them, as he necessarily must do, if, upon the evocation of an old hag, any messenger is permitted to go from him. Far be it from us therefore to have such conceptions of God. He is holy, and just, and uniform in all his ways; and therefore this coming at a call, and doing the witch's drudgery, must only appertain to some infernal spirit, who might possibly find his account in it at last. It was one of this wicked crew that either assumed a phantom or a real body, appeared in a mantle like Samuel, spake articulately, and held this conversation with Saul; which, considering his knowledge and foresight of things, he was well

(a) *Waterland's Sermons*, vol. ii.
(c) *Waterland*, *ibid*.

(b) *Calmet's Dissert. sur l'Apparition de Samuel*.

enough qualified to do, notwithstanding the sundry predictions, relating to future contingencies, which are contained in it." From 1 Sam. i. to the end.

How far the honour of God is concerned in this transaction will more properly fall under our next enquiry : In the mean time I cannot but observe, that whatever incongruity may be supposed in the real appearance of Samuel, it is not near so much as to find one of the apostate spirits of hell expressing so much zeal for the service of the God of heaven, and upbraiding Saul with those very crimes which he himself tempted him to commit ; as to find this wicked and impure spirit making use of the name of God (that sacred and tremendous name, whose very pronounciation was enough to make him quake and shiver) no less than six times in this intercourse with Saul, without any manner of uneasiness or hesitation ; as to find this angel of darkness, and father of lies, prying into the womb of futurity, and determining the most casual events positively and precisely. (a) We do not indeed deny but that the devil's knowledge is vastly superior to that of the most accomplished human understanding ; that his natural penetration, joined with his long experience, is such, that the greatest philosophers, the subtlest critics, and the most refined politicians, are mere novices in comparison of him : Yet what genius, (however exalted and improved) without a Divine revelation, could (as we said before) be able to foretel things that were lodged in God's own breast ; viz. the precise time of the two armies engaging, the success and consequence of the victory, and the very names of the persons that were to fall in battle. This is what the apparition plainly revealed to Saul : And yet this, we dare maintain, is more than any finite understanding, by its own mere capacity, could ever have been able to find out.

But (without this multitude of arguments) if we are to take the Scripture in its plain and literal sense, read we over the story of Saul and the witch of Endor never so often, we shall not so much as once find the devil mentioned in it. And therefore it is somewhat wonderful that he should be brought upon the stage by many learned men, merely to solve a difficulty, which, upon examination, appears to be none at all. But now, on the other hand, it appears, that through the whole narration Samuel is the only thing that is mentioned. It is Samuel whom Saul desires to be called up ; Samuel who appeared to the woman ; Samuel whom the woman describes ; Samuel whom Saul perceives and bows himself to, with whom he converses so long, and because of whose words he was afterwards so sore afraid.

The Scripture indeed speaks sometimes according to the appearance of things, and may call that by the name of Samuel which was only the semblance or phantom of him : But, that this cannot be the sense of the matter here, we have the testimony of the wise son of Sirach, (an excellent interpreter of canonical Scriptures), who tells us expressly, that (b) " Samuel, after his death, prophesied and shewed the king his end ;" pursuant to what we read in the version of the Septuagint, viz. that (c) " Saul asked counsel of one that had a familiar spirit, and Samuel answered him." So that, upon the whole, we may be allowed to conclude, that it was the real soul of Samuel, cloathed in some visible form, which at this time appeared to the king of Israel : But by what means, or for what purposes, it appeared, is the other question we are now to determine.

3. Several of the (d) fathers of the Christian church were of opinion, that the devil had a certain limited power over the souls of the saints, before Jesus Christ descended into hell, and rescued them from the tyranny of that prince of darkness. (e) St Austin, in particular, thinks, that there is no absurdity in saying that the devil was as able to call up Samuel's soul, as he was to present himself among the sons of God, or set our Saviour on one of the pinnacles of the temple ; and a (f) learned Jewish doctor supposes,

(a) *Saurin*, vol. iv. Dissert. xxxvi.

(b) *Ecclus.* xlv. 20.

(c) *1 Chron.* x. 13.

(d) *Justin Martyr*, in *Dial. cum Tryph.* and *Origen*, in *1 Reg. Cap.* xxviii.

(e) *De Diver. Quæst.*

lib. ii. p. 4.

(f) *R. Manas. Ben Israel*, de *Resurr. Mort.*

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that devils have such a power over human souls, for the space of a year after their departure, as to make them assume what bodies they please; and thereupon he concludes, (but very erroneously) that it was not a year from the time of Samuel's death to his appearance. But these are such wild and extravagant fancies as deserve no serious confutation. It is absurd to say, that the souls of saints (such as we are now speaking of) were ever in hell, and more absurd to say, that, if they are in heaven, it is in the power of any magical, nay, of any diabolical incantations, to call them down from thence. (a) Great, without all doubt, is the power of apostate angels; but miserable, we may say, would the state of the blessed be, if the other had any licence to disturb their happiness, when, and as long, as they pleased: For "God forbid, (b) says Tertullian, that we should believe, that the soul of any holy man, much less of a prophet, should be so far under his disposal, as to be brought up at pleasure by the power of the devil."

Since the devil then has no power to disturb the happiness of souls departed, this apparition of Samuel could not proceed from any magical enchantments of the sorceress, but must have been effected by the sole power and appointment of God, who is the sovereign Lord both of the living and of the dead: And, accordingly, we may observe from the surprise which the woman discovered upon Samuel's sudden appearing, that the power of her magic was not concerned therein, but that it was the effect of some superior hand. The Scripture relates the matter thus: (c) "When the woman saw Samuel, she cried with a loud voice; and the woman spake unto Saul, saying, Why hast thou deceived me, for thou art Saul? And the king said unto her, Be not afraid: What sawest thou? And the woman said unto Saul, I saw gods ascending out of the earth." Now, it is plain from this narration, that the woman saw something she was not accustomed to see. (d) Her necromancy had ordinarily power over demons only, or such wretched spirits as were submitted to the devil's tyranny; but on this occasion, she saw an object so august, so terrible, so majestic, so contrary indeed to any thing she had ever raised before, and that coming upon her before she had begun her enchantments, that she could not forbear being frightened, and crying out with a loud voice, as being fully satisfied that the apparition came from God.

"But since the Scripture assures us, that God had wholly withdrawn himself from Saul, and would answer him neither by prophets nor by dreams; how can we imagine that he should, all on a sudden, become so kind, as to send Samuel to him, or that Samuel should be in any disposition to come, when it was impossible for him to do any good by his coming?"

(e) Now there seems to be some analogy between God's dealing with Saul in this particular and his former treatment of the prophet Balaam. Balaam was for disobeying the orders which God had given him to bless the Israelites; and was searching into magical secrets for what he could not obtain of God, viz. a power to change into curses the blessings which God pronounced by his mouth. In this case there was but small likelihood that God would continue to communicate himself to a person so unworthy of any extraordinary revelation; and yet he did it: But then it was with a design to reveal to him those very miseries from which his mercenary mind was so desirous to rescue the Midianites. The application is easy: And it farther suggests this reason, Why God appointed Samuel at this time to appear unto Saul, viz. that through him he might give him a meeting where he least of all expected one; and might shew him, that the fate which his own disobedience had brought upon him was determined; that there was no reversing the decrees of heaven, no procuring aid against the Almighty's power, no fleeing (though it were to hell) from his presence, no hiding himself in darkness from his inspection, (f) "with whom darkness is no darkness at all, but the night is as clear as the day, and the darkness and light are both alike."

(a) *Saurin*, vol. iv. Dissert. xxxvi. (b) *De Anima*, c. 57. (c) 1 Sam. xxviii. 12, 13.
(d) *Calmet's* Dissert. sur l'Apparit. de Samuel. (e) *Saurin*, vol. iv. Dissert. xxxvi. (f) *Psal.* cxxxix. 12.

(a) That the souls of men departed have a capacity, and, no doubt, an inclination to be employed in the service of men alive, as having the same nature and affections, and being more sensible of our infirmities, than any pure and abstracted spirits are, can hardly be contested; that, in their absent state, they are embodied with aerial, or ethereal vehicles, which they can condense or rarify at pleasure, and so appear or not appear to human sight, is what some of the greatest men, both of the Heathen and of the Christian religion, have maintained; and that frequent apparitions of this kind have happened since the world began, cannot be denied by any one that is conversant in its history. If therefore the wisdom of God (for reasons already assigned) thought proper to dispatch a messenger to Saul upon this occasion, there may be some account given why the soul of Samuel (upon the supposition it was left to its option) should rather be desirous to be sent upon that errand: For, whatever may be said in diminution of Saul's religious character, it is certain, that he was a brave prince and commander; had lived in strict intimacy with Samuel; professed a great esteem for him in all things; and (b) was, by Samuel, not a little lamented, when he had fallen from his obedience to God. Upon these considerations we may imagine, that the soul of Samuel might have such a kindness for him, as to be ready to appear to him in the depth of his distress, in order to settle his mind by telling him the upshot of the whole matter, viz. that he should lose the battle, and he and his sons be slain; that so he might give a specimen (as the Jews love to speak in commendation of him) of the bravest valour that was ever achieved by any commander; fight boldly when he was sure to die, and sell his life at as dear a price as possible; that so in his death, he might be commemorated with honour, and deserve the threnodia which his son-in-law made on him; (c) "the beauty of Israel is slain upon the high places. How are the mighty fallen! From the blood of the slain, from the fat of the mighty, the bow of Jonathan turned not back, and the sword of Saul returned not empty. How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle!"

From 2 Sam.
i. to xix.

APPENDIX TO DISSERTATION III.

[TO the author's opinion, that it was the spirit of Samuel himself cloathed with some material vehicle or body, and probably wearing, as Dr Hales observes, the very same mantle in appearance, which was rent at the final rejection of Saul from the kingdom, which appeared, on this occasion, to confound as well the wretched woman as the impious monarch, I fully agree. Many authors of great name indeed, and among them the late Bishop Law of Carlisle, contend that this was a mere imposition practised upon Saul by the witch; but it is evident, as our author observes, that the witch herself expected not to see such a spectre as presented itself before her; and that the spectre made its appearance before it was called. That the raising of the dead by the necromancers of antiquity was in general nothing more than a juggler's trick, I have not the smallest doubt. It was indeed a trick not difficult to be performed; if we allow those, who pretended to such intercourse with the world of spirits, to have been as great adepts in *phantasmagoria* and *ventriloquism*, as some of the modern dealers in these arts, whom almost every man has seen amusing the learned, astonishing the vulgar, and picking the pockets of all. That in the days of universal idolatry, the devil and his angels had much greater power over the bodies and minds of men than they have now, and that these wicked spirits were occasionally permitted to utter ambiguous oracles

(a) Vide *Glanvil's Sadducismus Triumphatus*.

(b) 1 Sam. xvi. 1.

(c) 2 Sam. i. 15.

A. M. 2888,
&c. or 4301.
Ant. Chris.
1116, &c.
or 1110.

through the organs of heathen priests and priestesses, I am very far from calling in question; but I cannot bring myself to believe that even the devil or any of his angels was ever at the call of all such old women as chose to denominate themselves *witches*, in order to maintain an undue influence over their neighbours, and support themselves at their expence. During the course of this work I have had repeatedly occasion to observe, that there must have been much more science and art in the earliest ages of the post-diluvian world, than we are in general disposed to allow; and if any tolerable knowledge of the sciences of *acoustics* and *optics* prevailed among the ancients, it is easy to conceive, how the arts of *ventriloquism* and *phantom-raising* may have been invented by men of science, and taught even to the most illiterate;—nay, that these *arts* may have been handed down from generation to generation, long after the principles of *science* on which they are founded, were forgotten. I have myself conversed with a ventriloquist, who performed the most extraordinary feats in his art, who was extremely communicative on the subject of that art, and ready to answer every question which I put to him; but he was unfortunately so very illiterate as to speak a language which was hardly intelligible. I found no difficulty whatever in tracing his art to the *principles* on which it was founded, and have done so in another work (a); but he could not tell me, though I have no doubt but that he really wished to tell me*, in language which I could understand, by what means he produced his acoustic deceptions. That he was a great master of his *art* however, he gave me, and thousands besides me, the most complete proofs, making his voice appear to come sometimes from the roof of the room; sometimes from without the door, sometimes from below the floor, and once from the pocket of a gentleman sitting close by me, and at the distance of at least ten or twelve feet from the artist himself. Had this man combined with his *ventriloquism* that *phantasmagoric* art, by which some of our modern jugglers frighten the vulgar in a darkened room, he could easily have exhibited, without the aid of the devil, such a ghost as I have no doubt the witch of Endor meant and expected to exhibit to Saul.

The ghost however which really came, was sent by a different and a higher power, and sent for the same purpose that the dumb ass was made to reprove the madness of Balaam, and that incharter himself compelled to bless Israel. Necromancy was among the arts forbidden by the law of Moses, as equally with human sacrifices an abomination to the Lord. Saul had, in obedience to that law, lately exterminated, as he thought, all such impious diviners from Israel; and yet finding himself in his capacity of king forsaken by God, he had recourse, in his extremity, to one of those wretched beings who had escaped from the effects of his righteous zeal. Whether that woman, in the usual practice of her art, was a mere juggler, which is not improbable, or whether some angel of darkness was occasionally permitted to aid her in deceiving the people and enticing them to the idolatrous and licentious rites of the heathen, are questions which I presume not to answer; but no man can suppose that either she or her familiar spirit had the power of calling from their state of repose the departed spirits of good men made perfect. Even Saul himself, conscious as he was of being forsaken by God, could not expect from her the information which he wished, but through some means forbidden by that law which it was his duty to enforce; and if she was not aided by a familiar spirit, she must have practised arts calculated to persuade the people that she was. These arts were of heathen invention, and led to that idolatry which Saul was bound to root entirely out of the land; and no method can be conceived better calculated to confound the impious monarch, and to prevent the wretched woman from prac-

(a) Encycl. Britannica, ed. 3. Article VENTRILOQUISM.

* The purpose for which I wished the information, enabled me to offer him at least an adequate reward for it. The late Professor Robison of Edinburgh

consulted him at the same time, and for the same purpose; but every effort which he made to explain to us by what *means* he produced the deceptions was vain. He knew nothing of the principles on which his art was founded.

tising her impious arts for the future, than that which the Supreme Disposer of events adopted on this occasion. Before she commenced her incantations, and when her familiar, whether man or devil, was not yet ready to act his part, the real Samuel appeared before her, and gave to the infatuated king such an answer as there is no reason to suppose, he would have received from any pretended Samuel exhibited by her. The effect of all this seems to have been that no such arts as hers, were afterwards practised in Israel for many generations; for I recollect nothing exactly similar to them till the reign of Manasseh king of Judah; and it is not absolutely certain that even the *wizards* and *familiar spirits* with whom he dealt, were in the practice of calling people from the dead.]

From 1 Sam.
i. to the end.

CHAPTER IV.

FROM THE DEATH OF SAUL TO THAT OF ABSALOM. IN ALL 33 YEARS.

THE HISTORY.

DAVID was at Ziklag when news was brought him of the defeat of the Israelitish army, and of the death of Saul. The messenger was an Amalekite, † who pretended that he was the person who dispatched the king, after he found himself mortally wounded; and (however he came by them) produced Saul's crown and bracelet to verify what he said. He expected, no doubt, an ample compensation for this message and present; but instead of that, David ordered his guards to fall upon him, because (according to his own declaration) he had been accessory to the king's death.

From 2 Sam.
i. to xix.

Upon this conjuncture David, †² by God's directions, removed with his family and

† By the account which we have of king Saul's death, in the conclusion of the foregoing book, viz. that he "fell upon his own sword, and expired," 1 Sam. xxxi. 4. it seems very evident that the whole story of this Amalekite was a fiction of his own inventing, on purpose to ingratiate himself with David, the presumptive successor to the throne: But then the question is, how he came by Saul's crown and bracelet, since it is incongruous to think that he would ever wear them in the time of action, and thereby expose himself as a public mark? As therefore it is presumed that they were carried into the field of battle by some of his attendants, in order to be put on in case he had obtained the victory and returned in triumph; so the Jews have a conceit that Doeg, the infamous murderer of the priests at Nob, 1 Sam. xxii. 18. who at this time was his armour-bearer, had

them in his possession, and before he killed himself gave them to his son, (this young Amalekite) and ordered him to carry them to David, but to his cost found that David's reception was quite different to what he expected. For, being shortly to ascend the throne himself, he was willing to have it believed, that to slay the Lord's anointed, upon any account whatever, was in itself an execrable crime; and therefore, to clear himself from the imputation of being any ways accessory to so foul a fact (as his enemies would have been apt to imagine, had he given countenance to this pretended king-killer), he ordered him immediately to be put to death, and therein, at least, acted the part of a good politician, if not of a righteous judge. *Le Clerc's* and *Patrick's Commentaries* on 2 Sam. i.

†² Though David, after Saul's demise, had a right

A. M. 2949,
&c. or 4311.
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1055, &c.
or 1070.

forces † to Hebron, whither the princes of Judah in a short time came to congratulate his return into his native country, and to offer him the crown of their particular tribe; for by this time Abner, the late king's uncle, and general of his army, who had proclaimed his son Ishbosheth successor to the throne, had taken up his residence at †² Mahanaim, on the other side of Jordan, and, by his interest and great authority, prevailed with all the other tribes to recognise him.

David, however, at the request of the princes of his own tribe, was anointed king of Judah. For two years there were no hostilities on either side; but not long after this a war commenced between the two rival princes, in which there were several engagements, but none so remarkable as that which was occasioned by Abner's sending Joab (who was the general of David's forces) a challenge †³ to fight twelve men with an equal number of his in single combat. The men met, and to a man killed one another upon the spot; whereupon a fierce battle ensued, in which Abner and his men were defeated and put to flight. In the pursuit, Asahel, a younger brother of Joab's, being very nimble and swift of foot, made after Abner. When he came up with him, Abner, who knew him, desired him to desist, and not pretend to attack him, because he was loath to kill him; but the young man, ambitious of taking a general prisoner, pressed so hard upon him, that, †⁴ with a back-stroke of his spear, Abner gave him a wound, whereof he immediately died.

The victorious army, when they came to the place where Asahel's body lay slain, stood still, and ceased their pursuit; so that Abner had an opportunity to rally his scattered forces, and, making a stand upon an advanced ground where he could not well be attacked, sounded a parly, and reminded Joab, that they were all brethren, of the same nation, of the same religion, so that if they persisted in hostilities, both armies would have reason to rue it. Whereupon they parted, Abner (who had lost three hundred and sixty men in the engagement) to Mahanaim, on the other side of Jordan, and Joab, who (except his brother Asahel) had lost no more than nineteen, to Hebron.

During the course of this civil war, which lasted for some years, David's forces, in most rencounters, had the advantage, and his interest in the nation increased as that of

to the kingdom by virtue of God's designation; yet, as God had no where declared at what time he was to make use of this right, he would not enter into possession, nor take the administration of public affairs upon him, without having first consulted him.

Patrick's Commentary.

† Hebron was situate in the midst of the tribe of Judah; and, as it was a very ancient city, the metropolis of the whole tribe, and the possession of those priestly families who espoused David's interest. It was a very commodious city for him to make the place of his residence at this juncture; as being not unsensible, that the determination of the metropolis in his favour would be of great weight to influence the whole tribe: And accordingly we find, that he was soon invested with the sovereignty thereof. "For the men of Judah (saith the text) came, and there they anointed David king over the house of Judah," 2 Sam. ii. 4. *The History of the Life of King David*, vol. ii.

†² This was a place in the tribe of Gad, which had its name from the appearance of an host of angels to Jacob, as he came with his family and all his substance from Padan-aram, Gen. xxxii. 1. and the reasons for Abner's retreating hither in the beginning of the new king's reign, were, that he might secure the people on that side of the Jordan, and especially the gal-

lant inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead, who were great lovers of Saul, and attached to his family; that he might prevent the Philistines from falling upon the king, whom he had under his protection in the infancy of his reign; and chiefly, that he might be at a great distance from David, have the new king more absolutely under his command, and a better opportunity of raising recruits among a people, not only brave and courageous, but very well affected to the cause which he had espoused. *Calmet's Commentary*, and *Pool's Annotations*.

†³ The expression in the text is, "Let the young men now arise and play before us;" by which Abner seems to have meant, not that they should fall upon and destroy one another, but merely that they should practise a little their military exercises, or play at sharps, as gladiators anciently at Rome, and now among us, are wont to do, not with any purpose to kill one another, but only to divert the spectators. *Calmet's Commentary*.

†⁴ The expression in the text is,—That, "with the hinder part of the spear, he smote him under the fifth rib;" which Virgil, speaking of a mortal wound, has not unhappily imitated:

———Haud multa moratus

Excipit in latus, et, quâ fata celerrima, crudum
Transadigit costas et crates pectoris ens. *Æn. xii.*

Ishbosheth sensibly declined. Abner, indeed, as being both a brave and experienced warrior, and a man of great power and influence in all the tribes, more especially in that of Benjamin, was his main support; but with him he unhappily differed, upon account of Rizpah, one of Saul's concubines, whom Abner had debauched. To have any commerce with the relicts of princes (of what denomination soever they were) was in those days looked upon as an indignity offered to the royal family, and an † affectation of the kingdom. For this reason Ishbosheth remonstrated the matter to Abner; but Abner, who was an hot man, and impatient of reproof, was so incensed at what he said, that he upbraided him with ingratitude, and threatened not only to †² withdraw his own allegiance from him, but, as far as in him lay, to carry all Israel over to David's interest. And as he threatened, so he did. From that very moment he entered into a private correspondence with David, and not long after had a public interview with him. At this interview David entertained Abner and his attendants (which were in all but twenty persons) very splendidly; and in return Abner assured him, that he would use his utmost endeavours to prevail with the other tribes to come over to his side. But no sooner was he gone, than Joab, returning from an expedition against the Philistines, wherein he had been successful and taken abundance of spoil, and being soon informed that Abner had been there, and how kindly the king had received him, he not only expostulated the matter with the king in high terms, as having entertained a man that came only as a spy upon him, but sent likewise a messenger after Abner, desiring him to return, because the king had something more to communicate to him; and so, having way-laid him, under pretence of saluting him, he stabbed him to the heart, * out of jealousy partly, and partly in revenge of the blood of his brother Asahel.

David was extremely displeased at this cruel and inhospitable action; but his affairs were in so unsettled a state, and Joab at that time had so much credit with the army, that he could not call him to an account for what he had done; and therefore contented himself with declaring publicly †³ his detestation of it, and with making

† What notion the world, at this time, had of marrying any royal relict, is evident from the case of Adonijah, whom Solomon put to death for desiring but to ask for Abishag, one of David's concubines, though he had employed Bathsheba, the king's mother, to be his intercessor, and was himself his brother, 1 Kings ii. 17. It may be said, perhaps, that Adonijah was at this time aspiring at the throne, which Solomon perceiving, took occasion from this his request to fall out with him, and prevent it. But however this be, a general rule it was, not among the Jews only, but among other nations, that no private person should presume to marry the king's widow: for this made him appear as a rival and competitor for the crown. *Cabmet's Commentary.*

†² Abner is an instance of what a strange alteration the study of revenge will work in a man. It was but just lately, that we found him going about the country to confirm the Israelites in their attachment to the house of Saul, and opposition to David; but now, upon a slight disgust, he is not only for deserting himself, but for carrying all the strength of his interest over to the opposite party; for "such is the genius of many great ministers, says one, that upon slight occasions they are irritated, and do rather rule over kings than are ruled by them." *Patrick's Commentary.*

* Abner was a man longer versed in military affairs than himself, who, in the time of Saul's distraction, had been regent of the nation, and since the time

that he had set up Ishbosheth to be king, prime minister: And therefore Joab had reason to suspect, that, in case he once got into David's favour (as the service he was able to do him gave him a title to it), it would not be long before he would gain a superior ascendant; and therefore he took this wicked method to prevent him. For (to use the reflection which Josephus makes upon this occasion) "What will not men dare to do, who are covetous, ambitious, and will be inferior to none? They press forward to the end, without ever considering the means, and will commit a thousand crimes in pursuit of what they desire. Nor are they less bold in maintaining, than they were in acquiring their places and preferments by evil practices; insomuch that, rather than suffer the disgrace of losing what they have unjustly gotten, they will plunge themselves still deeper and deeper in wickedness to retain it." *Jewish Antiq.* lib. vii. c. 1.

†³ And reason good he had to express his detestation of so foul a fact. For besides that Abner was himself a man of great power and authority, and at this time the head of the contrary party, it carried an air of suspicion, that David might have some concern in the murder; especially since Joab, his first minister, and general of his forces, was the wicked instrument of it. Abner had been reconciled to David indeed, but this made the matter still worse, and added the breach of faith and hospitality to the sin of murder, which was enough to alienate the minds of

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a magnificent funeral for Abner, wherein he himself followed the corpse as chief mourner.

David indeed had reason to lament the death of Abner, which, in all probability, had defeated the measures that were concerted for the union of the two kingdoms, had not the sudden and untimely death of Ishbosheth paved the way for it afresh. Ishbosheth, upon the loss of Abner, began to despair of his affairs, grew negligent of himself, and fell under the contempt of his subjects; so that Rechab and Baanah, † two Benjamites that were of his household, came upon him as he was asleep in the heat of the day, and having cut off his head, †² carried it as a present to David at Hebron; but instead of the reward which they expected, he * rebuked them severely, and ordered their hands and feet to be cut off, and themselves hung up in a public place, for the terror of all regicides; but the head of Ishbosheth was honourably interred in Abner's tomb.

When Ishbosheth was dead, all the tribes of Israel sent their deputies to David, acknowledging his title, and promising him their allegiance, upon condition that he would reign righteously †³ over them; so that now he was anointed king over all the tribes,

the Israelites from him for ever: And therefore Josephus gives us this account of David's behaviour upon so critical an occasion, not only to testify his abhorrence of so base a practice, but to purge himself likewise upon the strictest niceties of faith and honour, that he had been true to Abner. "The moment he heard of Abner's death, he stretched out his right hand towards heaven in an appeal, and protestation, that he was neither privy, nor consenting to the fact, and cursed most bitterly the assassin, (whoever he was) his family, and accomplices. He appointed by proclamation a public mourning for him, with all the solemnities of tearing garments, and putting on sackcloth, &c. Himself, with his great ministers and officers, assisted at the funeral, and gave sufficient demonstration by wringing their hands, beating their breasts, and other expressions of sorrow, both of the veneration they had for Abner's memory, and the sense they had of so inestimable a loss; so that in the conclusion, all the people were perfectly satisfied, that David was far either from approving or consenting to so execrable a deed." *Jewish Antiq.* lib. vii. c. 1. and *Le Clerc's Commentary*.

† This is added to shew us, that these two regicides were not only officers in the king's army, but of the same tribe with Saul, and therefore had more ties than one upon them, to be honest and faithful to his family. For there is reason to believe that Saul, who lived in the borders of Benjamin, conferred more favours upon that tribe than any other, and might therefore justly expect, both to him and his, a greater esteem and fidelity from those of his own tribe than from others. This patronymic is therefore very properly prefixed to the names of Rechab and Baanah, to shew what vile ungrateful villains they were, and how justly they deserved the severe and exemplary punishment which David inflicted on them. *Le Clerc's Commentary*.

†² It may seem a little strange, that these two ruffians were not discouraged by David's punishing the Amalekite for killing of Saul, and by the detestation he had publicly shewn of Joab's baseness in murdering Abner: But the former of these cases, they might think, was not parallel to theirs; because Saul was anointed king by God's immediate direc-

tion, whereas Ishbosheth having never had such sacred unction, was no more than an usurper: And as for the latter, they may think that David's conduct, in relation to Abner's death, proceeded from art and policy, rather than any serious dislike of the thing itself; and in this opinion, they might the rather be confirmed when they saw Joab, instead of being punished, continuing in the very same post and power that he had before. *Pool's Annotations*.

* The manner in which Josephus makes David express himself upon this occasion, is to this effect:—"Wicked wretches that you are! prepare yourselves immediately to receive the just reward of your villainy. Do not you know that I requited the murder of Saul, when he who had taken away that sacred life had the confidence to bring me his golden crown, for an ostentation of the service he had done me in it? And yet it was at the instance of Saul that he did it, and to prevent the indignity of his being taken alive by his enemies. And am not I the same man now that I was then? or do you think that I am turned so abandoned a wretch since, as to countenance the most ptofigate of men and actions, or to account myself under any obligation to you, for dipping your hands (upon my account, as you would have it thought) in the blood of your Lord: for cutting the throat of a person (and in his bed too) so just, that he never did any man wrong, and so generous a patron and benefactor to your ungrateful selves, that all the advantages you can pretend to in this world are but what you stand indebted for to his bounty and goodness? you shall therefore now be sure to pay both for your breach of faith to your master, and the scandal you have cast upon me. For what greater wound can any man give me in my reputation, than to expose me for a person that can take pleasure in the tidings, or give countenance to the committing of so barbarous an assassination?" *Jewish Antiq.* lib. vii. c. 2. Which speech of David's has a good deal of the spirit of Alexander the Great in it, whose exacting of punishment of Bessus for his murder of Darius, drew from the historian this reflection, R. putābat enim, non tam hostem suum fuisse Darium, quam amicū ejus, a quo esset occisus; *Justin.* lib. xii. c. 5.

†³ This was David's part of the covenant, which

after that he had reigned at Hebron, over that of Judah only, for the space of seven years and six months.

From 2 Sam.
i. to xix.

Being thus invested with full regal power, and having † a multitude of brave and gallant soldiers to attend him, he made his first expedition against Jerusalem, to dispossess the Jebusites of the fort of Zion, which commanded the city, and was thought so impregnable, that when he summoned the besieged to surrender, they, in derision, replied, that the meanest of them all († their blind and lame) were able to defend it against all he could do. This incensed David to such a degree, that he caused proclamation to be made through the camp, that whoever should make his way first into the fort should be made captain-general of all his forces; whereupon Joab, who was a bold, pushing man, undertook to storm it, and carried it sword in hand. After this, David, for the reception of his guards and domestics, enlarged the buildings of the place, and made it his royal palace; while Joab repaired and beautified the old city Jebus, or Jerusalem, for the more commodious habitation of his subjects.

†² Hiram, who had lately made himself king of Tyre and Sidon, hearing how prosperous David was in all his affairs, sent an embassy to congratulate his accession to the throne, and withal a present of cedar trees, with carpenters and other artificers to assist him in his buildings. But the Philistine princes had other notions of David's grow-

the elders of Israel suggested to him in a very elegant metaphor, which here occurs the first time, though afterwards it is frequently used in sacred writ, especially in the prophets, as well as some profane authors. The expression is,—“Thou shalt feed my people Israel;” which was the rather made use of, to put David in mind that he was created a king, not so much for the advancement of his own honour and interest, as for the good and benefit of the community, which he was to rule with all tenderness, and watch over with all diligence. The very manner of the expression implies, that kings ought to have the same care of their people as the shepherd has over his flock; and that, as the shepherd is not the owner of the sheep he keeps, so should no king look upon his subjects as his own peculium, but as a flock committed to him by the only true Lord of all mankind, and to whom he must give an account of his administration. For “this is the greatest grace of a king, that he certainly believes himself to be made a king by God for the sake of the people; and let him often call to mind, that the people were not created or ordained by God for the king,” says Conradus Pelicanus upon these words. *Patrick's Commentary*, and *Pool's Annotations*.

‡ In this account of David's worthies, which are mentioned both in the second book of Samuel and the first of Chronicles, there is a great difference of names; and the reason is, because the catalogue in Chronicles was made in the beginning of David's reign, that in Samuel at the latter end; and so the former mentions those men who had helped David to his settlement in the kingdom, whereas the latter takes notice of those who had stuck to him all the time of his reign, and died in his service. *Bedford's Scripture Chronology*, lib. v. c. 5.

† The blind and the lame, says Luther upon this place, were the idols of the Jebusites, which, to irritate David, they set upon their walls as their patrons and protectors; and these they call blind and lame sarcas-

tically, and with respect to David's opinion: As if they had said, “These gods of ours, whom ye Israelites reproach as blind and lame, and so unable to direct or defend us, will secure us against you, and to your cost make you find that they are neither blind nor lame, but have eyes to watch for us, and hands to fight against you, so that you must conquer and subdue them before you take this place.” But this interpretation seems to be a little too metaphorical and forced; for which reason we have rather chosen the construction which Josephus (lib. vii. c. 2.) puts upon this passage, viz. that they imagined their fortress to be so impregnable, that, by way of contempt, they told David that their very blind and lame would be able to defend it against him and all his forces: and this is a sense so extremely plain and obvious, that the renowned Bochart wonders why any man of learning should seek for any other. The only exception to it is, that these blind and lame (which were rather objects of compassion) are said to have been extremely hated by David. But we may observe, that David here retorts the sarcasm upon them; the lame and blind, i. e. those who are set to defend the place, and who, as they pretended, were to be only the lame and the blind. And these were hateful to David, because they had wickedly and insolently defied the armies of the living God. *Pool's Annotations*, *Patrick's* and *Le Clerc's Commentaries*.

†² Abibalus was his primitive name, but before he entered into a league of amity with David, he changed it to Hiram, that so it might be the standing name of him and his successors—as Pharaoh, and after that Ptolemy in Egypt, Abimelech among the Philistines, and Cæsar among the Roman emperors. The name, in their language, signifies, “he lives that is exalted;” or, “let him live who is exalted,” i. e. “Let the king live for ever;” and his sending to David only under this name, is the true reason why no other name is mentioned in Scripture. *Bedford's Scripture Chronology*, lib. v. c. 4.

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ing greatness, which they took for a sure presage of their own downfall; and therefore, to put a stop to it as soon as possible, they raised one great army, which (as they approached to Jerusalem) he defeated; and the next year, when they came † with a much larger, God manifestly interposed in his favour. For, instead of advancing directly upon them, he ordered him to take a compass round by a wood of mulberry-trees, which would cover and conceal his march, and when he heard a sound, or rushing in the trees, (which would affrighten the Philistines) then to fall upon them; which he accordingly did, and gave them so total a defeat, that, for many years after, they never pretended to give Israel any more disturbance.

This time of rest and public security David thought a proper season wherein to bring home the ark of God (which for almost fifty years had continued in the house of Abinadab) into a place which he had prepared for it in his own city. To this purpose, attended with the ‡ principal men of the nation, and the chief officers of his court, together with a strong guard for the convoy of the ark, in case any enemy should attempt to surprise them, he came to Kirjath-jearim; but either through inadvertency or neglect of the (a) Divine law, which obliged them to carry it upon mens shoulders, they, in imitation of the Philistines, put it in a cart, and when the cart had like to have been overturned, Uzzah, who was one of its drivers, taking hold of the ark to prevent its falling, was immediately struck dead upon the spot; so that David, terrified at this judgment, durst not at that time carry it into Jerusalem, but left it near the city, in the house of Obed-Edom, a Levite, whom God blessed with a large increase of all his substance, for the little time that it continued with him. In the space of three months, the king, recollecting that none were to carry the ark but the Levites, though they themselves were expressly forbidden (b) to touch it, he adventured to remove it from Obed-Edom's, which he did in great form and solemnity. The Levites who were to bear the ark on their shoulders he caused to be sanctified; himself, clothed in a linen ephod, and † dancing before it, brought it into a convenient place which he had prepared for it; offered a great quantity of * sacrifices upon this occa-

† It cannot well be supposed, that the Philistines, out of their small territories, could produce such vast numbers of men as they brought against the Israelites; and therefore the remark which Josephus makes, helps to explain this matter, viz. "that Syria and Phœnicia, as well as several other warlike nations, were engaged in this confederacy;" but this cannot be meant of Hiram, who was in a league of the strictest amity with David, but of such Phœnicians only as would not submit to him, and therefore joined with the Philistines, first to subdue his ally, and then to subdue him before his government could be settled. *Bedford's Scripture Chronology*, lib. v. c. 4.

‡ It is supposed by some, that this bringing back of the ark was appointed to be on one of the three great festivals; and the reason why David might summon so many of his principal ministers and officers to accompany him in the expedition, might be—to possess the young people, who perhaps had heard little or nothing of the ark, by reason of its having been absent so long, with a mighty veneration for it when they saw the king and so many of the chief nobility waiting on it, with such a variety of music, and such public declarations of joy. *Miller's History of the Church*.

(a) Numb. iv. 15.

(b) Ibid. and xviii. 3.

† Strabo tells us, that it was customary among the Greeks, as well as other nations, to use music and

dancing in the processions before their gods. Lib. 10. Callimachus mentions the chori and dancings of the youth at the altar of Apollo; Plato observes, that among the Egyptians, all kinds of music, songs, and dances, were consecrated to their gods. *De Legibus*, l. 3. And even Lucian (*De Saltatione*) expressly says, that among the ancients no ceremonial of religion, no expiation, no atonement, was accounted rightly accomplished without dancing. So that David was far from being singular in his behaviour upon this occasion; nor was his behaviour, in this particular, any disparagement to his regal dignity. His dancing, i. e. his moving in certain serious and solemn measures, suited to music of the same character and tendency, was an exercise highly conducive to the purposes of piety, and his mixing with the public festivities of his people, was a condescension (as Tacitus relates of Augustus the Roman emperor) not unbecoming the greatest monarch. Policy taught Augustus to put himself upon a level with his subjects in the public rejoicings; piety taught David, that all men are upon a level in the solemnities of religion. So that David was not singular in his behaviour upon this occasion. *Patrick's Commentary*, and *The History of the Life of King David*, vol. ii.

* The words in the text are,—“And it was so, that when they that bare the ark of the Lord had gone six paces, he sacrificed oxen and fatlings, 2 Sa-

sion; and with the rest of the company that attended this solemnity, feasted and rejoiced. From 2 Sam. i. to xix.

† His wife Michal, who was Saul's daughter, and proud perhaps upon account of her pedigree, †² upbraided him upon this occasion with his humility, as a diminution of his regal dignity; but he, in reply to the sarcastic manner wherein she spake it, only told her, "That what he had done was in honour of that God who had chosen him to govern Israel rather than any of her family; and that such condescensions as these would never bring him under any just contempt."

By this time the palace, which Hiram king of Tyre had furnished David with men and materials to build, was finished; and, as he was reflecting upon the meanness of God's habitation in comparison of his own, it came into his mind to build a noble fabric for his religious worship; which design he communicated to †³ Nathan. Nathan at first approved of it; but the night following he was commanded to forbid it, with this assurance, that God accepted of his sincere intentions; promised that his son should succeed him, and build him a temple; and that his posterity should reign †⁴ for many generations.

muel vi. 13. From which words some would infer, that David, having measured the ground between Obed-Edom's house and the place he had built for the reception of the ark, had altars raised, at the distance of every six paces, whereon he caused sacrifices to be offered as the ark passed by. But it is easy to imagine what a world of confusion this would create in the procession; and therefore the more rational construction is, that after those who carried the ark had advanced six paces, without any such token of Divine wrath as Uzzah had undergone, then did they offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving to God, which might consist of several living creatures, all sacrificed and offered up at once. But even supposing that at set distances there were sacrifices all along the way that they went; yet we are to know, that it was no unusual thing for heathens to confer on their gods, nay, even upon their emperors, the same honours that we find David here bestowing upon the ark of the God of Israel. For in this manner (as Suetonius tells us) was Otho received, "*cum per omne iter, dextrâ sinistraque, oppidatim victimæ cæderentur.*" And the like he relates of Caligula: "*Ut a miseno movit, inter altaria, et victimas, ardentisque tædas, densissimò obviæ agmine incessit.*" *Calmet's* Commentary.

† After that, David was by Saul banished from court, and forced to seek for shelter in foreign countries, Saul, to cast the more contempt upon him, gave his wife away to one Phalti, (or Phaltiel), son of Laish of Gallim; but David, when he came to the crown of Judah, had her restored to him again; for which purpose he sent messengers to Ishbosheth, who then reigned over the eleven tribes at Mahanaim, to demand her, and who, according to that demand, took her from Phaltiel, and sent her back to David. The Hebrews pretend that Phaltiel never came near Michal, who, in strictness, could not be his wife, because she had never been divorced by David; but others believe that she had five sons by Phaltiel, which were given up to the Gibeonites to be executed, as is related 2 Sam. xxi. 8, 9. But in this place there seems to be an error crept into the text, which should be read Merob instead of Michal. *Calmet's* Dictionary under the word *Michal*.

†⁴ The words of Michal, wherein she upbraids David, are these:—"How glorious was the king of Israel to-day, who uncovered himself to-day in the eyes of the handmaids of his servants, as one of the vain fellows shamefully uncovereth himself!" 2 Sam. vi. 20. At first reading they seem to intimate, that David, in his dancing, had exposed his naked body, and acted, some way or other, immodestly: But these words, we are to consider, were spoken in a fit of passion, and when Michal was minded to aggravate matters; for it is not to be doubted but that David kept himself within the bounds of modesty, how joyous soever he might be. It was a command which God gave the Israelites, that they should rejoice in their feasts, Deut. xii. 7. but then, their joy was not to be lascivious or petulant, but pious and moderate. In the case before us, David was in the more immediate presence of God, and about a very sacred business; and therefore it is incongruous to think that he would commit any thing immodest: And, that he could not expose his nakedness (as his wife would insinuate), is evident from his having not only an ephod on, but being clothed with a robe of fine linen, besides his usual under-garments, 1 Chron. xv. 27. and therefore, though his putting off his regal robes might give some occasion to Michal's expression of his uncovering himself, yet it must be owned, that this opprobrious term proceeded from nothing but the overflowing spleen of a proud passionate woman. *Calmet's* and *Patrick's* Commentaries.

†³ At what time this prophet began to appear in Israel, we are no where informed. This is the first time that the Scripture makes mention of him. He was a man of great temper, prudence, and fine address, who knew how to mitigate the rigour of his reproofs with a great deal of sweetness and wisdom, which qualified him so well for the conversation of kings, and other great persons. He was always equally esteemed and beloved by David, and in his conduct towards him, maintained a just medium between an inflexible austerity, and a servile flattery. *Calmet's* Commentary.

†⁴ The words in the text are, "I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever;" which, in their pri-

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or 1070.

David was a man of war, and therefore, since God had refused him the privilege of building him a temple, and had reserved that work for his son Solomon (whose name denotes peaceable) to execute, he thought himself bound to subdue all his enemies on every side, that, when his son came to undertake that great affair, he might meet with as little molestation as possible.

In the beginning of his reign, the Philistines had twice invaded him, and therefore he began with them. Their royal city of Gath, which was called *Metheg-Ammah*, or the *bridge of Ammah*, (because it stood upon an hill of that name, and was a bridle to curb the tribe of Judah, and keep them in obedience) he took, and made it a barrier against themselves. The Moabites he utterly subdued; and having dismantled all their strong places, he † slew the greater part of them, reserving such only as were requisite to till the ground. From hence he marched his army to secure his territories which bordered upon the Euphrates. The Syrians of Zobah, under the command of †² Hadadezer, came with a strong force, and gave him battle; but he soon routed them, and, besides a great number of foot-prisoners, took a thousand chariots, and seven thousand horsemen that attended them; but reserving to himself no more horses than were necessary for an hundred chariots, the rest he ham-stringed, to make them unserviceable for war. †³ The Syrians of Damascus, hearing of Hadadezer's ill success, came to his assistance: But David put them to the rout likewise; and having slain two and twenty thousand of them, he became master of their country, put garrisons into their fortified cities, and made them tributary; and (what was another victory in this expedition) in his return from Syria, he engaged a great body of Edomites †⁴ in the valley of Salt; slew eighteen thousand of them, and brought them under the like subjection.

mary sense, do relate to the terrestrial kingdom of David's family, and the long duration of it, enough to justify the expression *for ever*, taken in a less strict signification: But if we take it in a more sublime and absolute sense, it can belong to none but that son of David, to whom God the Father gave an eternal kingdom (properly so called) over all things both in heaven and earth, which, though it was not so well known in the times when this prophecy was uttered, was, by the event afterwards, made plain and evident. *Le Clerc's Commentary.*

† There is no small obscurity in the words of the text, which are these: "He smote Moab, and measured them with a line, casting them down to the ground; even in two lines measured he to put to death, and with one line to keep alive." Which words seem to allude to a custom among the kings of the East, when they were thoroughly incensed against any nation, viz. to make the captives all come together in one place, and prostrate themselves upon the ground; that, being divided into two parts, as it were with a line, their conqueror might appoint which part he pleased either for death or life, which was sometimes determined by casting of lots. Some are of opinion that David made three lots or parts of these Moabites, two of which he ordered to be slain, and one part only to be kept alive. The reason of this his severity against these miserable people, the Rabbins assure us, was, because they had slain his parents and brethren, whom he had committed to the custody of the king of Moab during his exile. But of the reality of this motive, there is no manner of appearance; and since this execution, which David inflicted, may relate either to the whole nation or the army only, to clear David from the imputation of too much

cruelty, we should rather conceive it of the third, or half part at most, of the army. *Le Clerc's and Calmet's Commentaries.*

†² In the Fragment of Nicholaus Damascenus which Josephus has preserved, this prince is simply called Adad, which was the common name of the kings of Syria, who, according to the manner of other eastern princes, took their titles from the celestial bodies, and, in their language, *Adad* signifies the *sun*. The fragment recorded by Josephus is to this effect: "A long time after, one Adad, a valiant man, and a native of the place, had the command of Damascus and Syria, Phœnicia only excepted. There happened to be a war between the same Adad and David the king of the Jews, and several encounters between them; but in the end, Adad was overcome at Euphrates, behaving himself with the resolution of a brave prince, and a great captain." The same author, speaking farther of his posterity, says, "That the government was handed down from father to son to the tenth generation, and that the successor still received the father's name with the empire, as the Ptolemies did among the Egyptians. *Jewish Antiq.* lib. vii. c. 6.

†³ *Aram Damasek*, which we translate *Syria of Damascus*, was that part of Syria which lay between Libanus and Antilibanus, whose chief city was Damascus, situate in a valley, called by several names in Scripture, and watered by five rivers, the two principal of which, viz. Albana and Pharpâr (mentioned in 2 Kings v. 12.) descended from Mount Hermon; whereof the latter washed the walls of Damascus, and the other ran through it and divided the city into two parts. *Patrick's Commentary.*

†⁴ The Valley of Salt here is thought by many to

Thus loaded with honours and spoils David returned from this campaign; but all the rich materials that he had compiled together, viz. gold, silver, and brass, he dedicated to the Lord, or laid them up for the future use of the temple: And (what was no small addition to his store) Toi, the king of Hamath, hearing of his victories, sent his own son to congratulate him thereupon, and, in a large present of vessels of gold, and vessels of silver, &c. to acknowledge his kindness in breaking the power of his most inveterate enemies.

From 2 Sam.
i. to xix.

All the while that David was thus engaged in foreign wars, he took care to have justice administered to his subjects at home, and had a certain number of very great men employed in the highest offices of trust. Joab (as we said before) was captain-general; Jehoshaphat † chancellor of the kingdom; Abiathar was high priest; Seraiah secretary of state; Benaiah, †² captain of his guard; and his own sons the prime ministers of his household, such as lord chamberlain, lord treasurer, lord steward, as we call them; and to these he added one more, Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, to whom he restored all his grandfather Saul's estate; and though he was a cripple, †³ and lame of both his feet, yet (for the love he had for his father) he entertained him with great kindness, and ordered him to sit with his own sons at the royal table every day.

be the places adjoining to the Dead Sea; but as the country of the Edomites, whom David subdued in his return from his expedition into Syria, must necessarily lie towards the east of Canaan, we must look for some other Valley of Salt in the confines of that country. Now, about a league southward from the city of Palmyra, or Tadmor, in the road to Edom, we find a large plain abounding with salt pits, whence a great part of Syria is furnished with that commodity; and therefore it is very probable that the battle between David's generals and the Edomites was fought in this plain, which is about two days journey from Bozrah, the capital city of the eastern Edom, whence the people might march out to meet David's forces, and oppose them in their return home. *Calmet's Commentary.*

† The word in our translation is *recorder*, which in the marginal note is *remembrancer*, or *writer of chronicles*; an employment of no mean estimation in the eastern world, where it was customary with kings to keep daily registers of all the transactions of their reigns; and a trust which, whoever discharged to purpose, must be let into the true springs and secrets of action, and consequently must be received into the inmost confidence. For whether the office of a lord chancellor was consistent with the constitution of the Jewish state, a modern author seems to doubt. *History of the Life of King David*, vol. ii.

†² These guards are called in the text the Cherethites and the Pelethites, but who they were, is variously conjectured. That they were soldiers, is evident from their being mentioned as present at the proclamation of king Solomon against Adonijah, which could not conveniently have been done without some armed force to protect the persons that proclaimed him; and that they were not common soldiers, but the constant guards of David's person, is manifest, from the title of Σωματοφύλακες, *keepers of the body*, which Josephus gives them. Some are of opinion that they were men of a gigantic stature; but we find no ground for that, though they were doubtless pro-

per and robust men, (as we speak) and of known fidelity to their prince, 2 Sam. xv. 18. and xx. 7. Others again think that they were Philistines; but it is hardly supposable that David would have any of these hated uncircumcised people to be his body-guard; neither can we believe that the Israelitish soldiers would have taken it patiently, to see foreigners of that nation put in such places of honour and trust. Cherethite, however, is certainly but another name for Philistine, as appears from Zephaniah ii. 5. and therefore the question is,—How came any of David's subjects to be called after that name? And the answer to this is obvious,—They were so called because they went at first with him into Philistia, and continued there with him all the time that he was under the protection of Achish. These were the persons who accompanied him from the beginning, in his utmost distress, and claved to him in all calamities; and therefore it is no wonder if men of such approved fidelity were made choice of for his body-guard; nor is it any uncommon thing in history, for legions or bands of soldiers to take their names, not from the place of their nativity, but their residence, and very frequently from the name of their captain or commander. Since therefore, in 1 Chron. xii. 3. we find mention made of one Pelet, the son of Azmaveth, who resorted to David while he was at Ziklag, but still under the protection of Achish; it is but supposing him to be their captain, and then we come to the reason why they were called Pelethites, unless we suppose them rather denominated from Peleth, son of Jonathan, who was of the king's own tribe. *Patrick's Commentary*, *Pool's Annotations*, and *The History of the Life of King David*.

†³ Mephibosheth was very young when his father Jonathan was killed at the battle of Gilboa, which put his nurse into so great a consternation, that she let the child fall as she was making haste to escape with him; and from that time he was lame of both feet ever after, 2 Sam. iv. 4.

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David, not long after this, hearing that his † old friend Nahash was dead, sent his compliments of condolence to his son and successor Hanun; but the great men that were about the young king, made him believe that the sole intent of David's sending this embassy was to spy out the weakness of the city, and in what place it might most advantageously be assaulted: so that the too credulous prince ordered the ambassadors to be treated in the most ignominious manner, and with * their beards half-shaved, and their clothes cut short even to the middle of their buttocks, to be sent about their business.

The ambassadors being ashamed to return home, were ordered to continue at Jericho until their beards grew again; but, as for the indignity put upon them, David gave them assurance that he would resent it in a proper manner. Accordingly he sent an army under the command of Joab, to call these unhospitable Ammonites to an account. The Ammonites were apprised of his design, and therefore provided against the worst, by procuring three and thirty thousand mercenaries of the Syrians, who lay encamped at some distance in the fields, whilst their own forces covered the city.

Upon this situation of the enemy Joab divided his army into two bodies, one of which he gave to his brother Abishai, to keep the Ammonites in play, while himself with the other, which consisted of his choice men, attacked the Syrians. Their agreement was to relieve each other, in case there was occasion: But Joab, at the first onset, charged the Syrians so home, that, as they were but mercenaries, and thought not the cause their own, they soon gave way, which made the Ammonites, who depended much upon their courage, endeavour to secure themselves by retreating into their city; for the season of the year being too far advanced, made it impracticable for Joab to besiege it.

Hadadezer had assisted the Ammonites with some forces the last campaign; and being apprehensive that David would fall foul upon him, he resolved to be beforehand with him. To this purpose, levying a vast army, not only in Syria, but in Mesopotamia likewise, he sent it, under the command of Shobach his general, over the river Euphrates, as far as Helam, a town in the borders of the half tribe of Manasseh. This David had soon intelligence of, and therefore uniting all his forces, he marched with the utmost expedition, and coming upon the enemy sooner than was expected, slew seven

† What the particular benefits which David had received from Nahash were, we are no where told in Scripture; but some of the Jews say, that he fled to him, when he durst stay no longer with Achish king of the Philistines, and that he received him very kindly; others, that he entertained his relations when the king of Moab, to whom he had committed them, slew some of them; but the most likely opinion is,—that as he was a bitter enemy to Saul, who had given him a great overthrow, he for that very reason became a friend to David, when he perceived how Saul persecuted him, and thereupon might send him relief and assistance, and perhaps offer him protection in his kingdom. *Patrick's Commentary.*

* This was one of the greatest indignities that the malice of man could invent, in those countries where all people thought their hair so great an ornament, that some would have rather submitted to die than part with it. What a foul disgrace and heavy punishment this was accounted in ancient times, we may learn from Nicholas Damascenus, as mentioned by Stobæus (tit. 42.), who says, that among the Indians the king commanded the greatest offenders to be shaven, as the heaviest punishment that he could inflict upon them; and, to the like purpose, Plutarch (in

Agasil.) tells us, that whenever a soldier, among the Lacedæmonians, was convicted of cowardice, he was obliged to go with one part of his upper lip shaved, and the other not. Nay, even at this day, no greater indignity can be offered to a man of Persia than to cause his beard to be shaved; and therefore Tavernier, in his travels, relates the story, that when the Sophi caused an ambassador of Aureng-zeb's to be used in this manner, telling him, that he was not worthy to wear a beard, the emperor (even in the manner as David here did) most highly resented the affront that was done to him in the person of his ambassador. And as shaving David's ambassadors was deservedly accounted a grievous affront, so the cutting off half the beard (which made them look still more ridiculous) was a great addition to it, where beards were held in great veneration; and where long habits down to the heels were worn (especially by persons of distinction) without any breeches or drawers, the cutting their garments, even to the middle, thereby to expose their nakedness, was such a brutal and shameless insult, as would badly become a man of David's martial spirit, and just sentiments of honour, to have tamely passed by. *Patrick's and Calmet's Commentaries.*

thousand men, who attended seven hundred chariots; which so disheartened the rest, that he soon dispatched forty thousand more, together with their general, who fell in the action, and died upon the spot. Upon this success, several petty kings, who had assisted Hadadezer in this expedition, fearing some worse consequences, made a peace with David, and became tributary to him; and even Hadadezer himself, being thus forsaken by his confederates, gave him assurance that he would no longer espouse the cause of the Ammonites, but leave them to shift for themselves; whereupon David sent Joab against them with a powerful army, who laid the country waste, destroyed all that came in his way, and (to make short of the matter) laid siege to their royal city of Rabbah.

While Joab was carrying on the siege of Rabbah, David continued in Jerusalem, and walking one evening † on the top of his palace to take the fresh air, he chanced to * espy a beauteous woman bathing herself in her garden. The unguarded king, as soon as he saw her, was smitten; and enquiring who she was, was informed that she was Bathsheba, the daughter of Ammiel, and wife of Uriah †² the Hittite, an officer in his army, who was then with Joab at the siege of Rabbah. David sent for her, lay with her, and dismissed her: But in a short time, finding herself with child, she apprised him of it, and desired him withal to consult her honour and safety in devising some means to conceal it. Hereupon he sent a dispatch to Joab for Uriah to come to him, as if he had something particular to enquire of him; but his whole intent was to give him an opportunity of lying with his wife, that so the child, when it was born, might be reputed his. Uriah came; and after the king had asked him some few questions concerning the condition of the army, and the advances of the siege, he ordered him to go home, †³ and refresh himself after his journey, and sent an handsome collation after him for his entertainment. But so it was, that, instead of going near his wife, he chose to sleep in the guard-room.

† The manner of building, in all eastern countries, was to have their houses flat-roofed, with a terrass and parapet wall for the convenience of walking in the cool air; and as David's palace was built on one of the highest places of Mount Sion, he might easily look down upon the lower parts of the town, and take a view of all the gardens that were within a due distance. *Le Clerc's Commentary.*

* Thus Jupiter is said to have seen Proserpina washing herself, and exposing her whole body to his view, which inflamed his lust after her:

Λουομένης ὅλον εἶδος ἰδέετο Πουρσεφονείης.

But whether it was in her garden, or court-yard, overlooked by the palace, or in some apartment in her house whose windows opened that way, that this woman bathed herself, is not so certain. Tradition points out the place of a fountain still called after her name, which would make it probable that she bathed in a garden, did not Josephus expressly declare, that it was in her own house, as indeed the natural modesty and decency of her sex, as well as the circumstance of the time (for then it was evening) make his account more probable; nor can it be doubted, but that the declining rays of the sun, shooting into the inmost recesses of her chamber, and throwing a great lustre around her, might discover her very clearly to very distant eyes, without the least suspicion, on her part, of any possibility of being seen, and, consequently, with all the reserve of modesty proper to her sex,

The History of the Life of King David, vol. iii.

†² Uriah, though an Hittite by nation, was proselyted to the Jewish religion, and so, marrying with a Jewish woman, lived in Jerusalem; or, as he was one of the king's life-guard, which, for reasons above-mentioned, seem to have been all natives, and of the tribe of Judah, this additional name might perhaps be given him for some gallant action achieved against the Hittites, in the same manner as a Roman, in after-ages, came to be called Africanus, Germanicus, Parthicus, &c. upon account of victories obtained over the Africans, Germans, or Parthians. *Calmet's Commentary.*

†³ The words in the text are,—“Go down to thy house, and wash thy feet,” 2 Sam. xi. 8. for in these countries, where it was not the custom to wear shoes, but sandals only, and in some places to go barefoot, washing the feet was a great refreshment after a journey, and a common compliment that the master of the house usually made to any stranger at his first entrance. But this custom of washing the feet was not only after a journey, to cleanse them from dirt and dust, but very much used likewise before people sat down to meat; and therefore David's meaning in the expression is, that Uriah should go down and feast with his wife (for which reason he sent a collation to his house), and, after so long an absence, indulge himself in her company. For David's intention hitherto was, neither to murder Uriah, nor marry his wife, but only to skreen her honour and his own crime. *Calmet's Commentary.*

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David was informed of this the next morning, and was therefore resolved to make use of another expedient. He invited him to sup at his own table, and prevailed with him to drink to such a pitch, that he did not doubt but that the heat of the liquor would have inflamed his appetite, and made him go home to his wife; but still he lay in the guard-room, and, in excuse to the king, said, that he thought it was his duty so to do, while the rest of the soldiers were encamped: So that, finding himself still disappointed, the king ordered him at last back to the army, and * sent with him letters to Joab, wherein he commanded him to manage matters so, that Uriah might be killed by the Ammonites, which accordingly came to pass: For, in an assault upon the town, Uriah, being deserted by the other soldiers, who had private orders to retire when the onset began, *² fell immediately by the enemy's sword.

As soon as Uriah was dead, Joab sent an express thereof to the king, who returned him orders to carry on the siege with more vigour, until he had made himself master of it; and then to raze it even with the ground, and to put all the inhabitants to the sword, without sparing so much as one man. Upon this order, Joab advanced his approaches, and renewed his assaults every day, until he had got possession of *³ the water-works which supplied the town; and then sent a courier to acquaint the king, that the city was reduced to the utmost extremity, was in no condition to hold out much longer, and therefore he desired him to come in person, that he might have the honour of taking it. The king, according to his general's desire, went with a strong reinforce-

* It may be thought, perhaps, that Uriah suspected something of his wife's adultery, and therefore, resolving that it should be discovered, would not be persuaded to go down to his house. But if he did, he certainly acted the part of a trusty servant, when he would not open the king's letter to know what was in it, though, upon supposition that he suspected his criminal commerce with his wife, he had reason to expect no good. This puts one naturally in mind of the story of Bellerophon's carrying letters from Prætus to his father-in-law Jobates, king of Lycia, with an order to kill him; from whom it came into a proverb, to carry Bellerophon's letters, or a death-warrant against one's self, according to that passage in Plautus:

Aha! Bellerophontem jam tuus me fecit filius,

Egomet tabellas detuli ut vincirer. *Bacchid.*

For the fate of Uriah and Bellerophon are so very much alike, that the fable of the latter seems to be founded upon the story of the former. Bellerophon, who, as some scholiasts think, should be read *Boulepheron* (a council-carrier), was a stranger at the court of Prætus, as Uriah (being an Hittite) was at the court of David. He declined the embraces of Sthenobæa, as Uriah did the bed of Bathsheba; and was, for that reason, sent to Jobates, general of Prætus's army, with letters, which contained a direction to put him to death, as Uriah was sent to Joab, David's general. By Jobates he was sent with a small guard upon an attack, in which it was intended he should be slain, as Uriah was by Joab to that in which he fell. The main of the history is the same in both; the similitude of Jobates and Joab's name is very remarkable; and the variation in the whole only lies in some such ornamental embellishments as might well be expected in a poetical composition. *Calmet's Commentary*, and *The History of the Life of King David*.

† The fate and fall of the gallant Uriah is thus re-

lated by Josephus:—"Joab put Uriah upon a desperate forlorn, and, to cover his design, gave him several brave men to back him, with a promise to support him with the whole army, in case there were any possibility of entering the town; and, at the same time, recommended it earnestly to him, to maintain the reputation he had already acquired with the king and the army, by acquitting himself gallantly upon this occasion. Uriah with great cheerfulness undertook the post, while Joab gave his companions private orders to withdraw, and leave him, as soon as they found themselves in danger. The Hebrews pressed hard upon the wall, and put the Ammonites under a dreadful apprehension that they would force the town; whereupon the besieged threw open their gates, and made a desperate sally, which was as good as a signal to those that were with Uriah to abandon him; which accordingly they did, and left him to be cut to pieces. He did all the execution that was possible to be done by one single man against numbers, and, after several wounds received, fell like a man of honour, with his face to the enemy." *Jewish Antiq.* lib. vii. c. 7.

*³ Some learned men are of opinion, that this royal city of Rabbah was likewise called "the city of waters," either because it stood upon a river, or was encompassed with water both for its defence and delight. But Junius renders it, that "he cut off the waters which supplied the town;" which translation not only Josephus seems to favour, by telling us, that Joab seized on all the aqueducts which led into the city; but Polybius (lib. v.) likewise, speaking of the siege of this same place by Antiochus, relates the story, how a certain deserter discovered to that prince a subterraneous passage, through which the besieged came to draw water, which Antiochus stopped up, and, by reason of their thirst, compelled them to surrender. *Pool's Annotations*, and *Calmet's Commentary*.

ment, took the place by storm, gave the plunder of it to his soldiers, but reserved to himself what belonged to the king, among which was the crown of inestimable value. Having thus wasted the city, and divided the spoil, he put the men who had held it out against him to the most exquisite torments; and other places that would not immediately surrender, he treated with the same severity.

Upon the death of Uriah, his wife * Bathsheba pretended to mourn for him; but it was not long before David sent for her, † and declared her his wife: And in this state he continued without any molestation or apprehension of having done wrong, for the space of several months, till at length God sent †² Nathan the prophet to rouse him out of his adulterous lethargy, and by *² an elegant parable, to represent the baseness and wickedness of what he had done, and to make him pronounce sentence against his guilty self.

* How long widows were to mourn for their husbands, there is no express precept in the law; but the usual time for common mourners was no more than seven days; and we cannot suppose that Bathsheba was much longer, considering the reason we have to apply to her the words of Lucan:

——— Lacrymas non sponte cadentes

Effudit, gemitusque expressit pectore læto.

† According to the Jewish doctors, it was utterly unlawful for any to marry another man's wife, in case he had defiled her before. The canonical law declares such marriages null and void, as are contracted between an adulterous man and a woman that was partner with him in the crime; and though the law of Moses does not expressly forbid them, yet we may not thence infer, that they were permitted among the Jews. For these reasons, some have thought, that this marriage of David and Bathsheba was null and invalid; but others, upon better grounds, have supposed, that though there were many criminal circumstances attending it, yet these did not vacate its effect, and, in short, though it ought not to have been done, yet, being done, the marriage was good, and the children which were afterwards born were legitimate. *Calmet's* and *Patrick's* Commentaries.

†² We learn little more of this great man in the Sacred Writings, but that he was David's prophet, intimate counsellor, and historiographer. Josephus says of him, that he was a polite and a prudent man, one, who knew how to temper the severity of wisdom with sweetness of manners. And Grotius compares him to Manius Lepidus, of whom Tacitus says, that he had a talent of turning away Tiberius's mind from those cruel purposes, to which the vile flattery of others inclined him, and was, at the same time, in equal favour and authority with him. Nathan certainly knew the art of reproving kings with authority, and yet, without giving offence. So far from that, he grew in his prince's favour and estimation as long as he lived; insomuch, that David (as tradition tells us) called one son after his name, and committed another (even his beloved Solomon) to his care and tuition. *The History of the Life of King David*, vol. iii.

*² There is a passage of Seneca, (Epist. lix.) where he treats of the style fit for philosophic writing, which suits so well with this parable of Nathan's, that I chuse to give it in his own words, as a fit preamble to the short comment which follows of it. "Invenio, in-

quit, imagines, quibus si quis nos uti vetat, et poetis illas solis judicat esse concessas, neminem mihi videtur ex antiquis legisse, apud quos nondum captabatur plausibilis oratio. Illi, qui simpliciter, et demonstrandæ rei causâ loquebantur, parabolis referti sunt, quas existimo necessarias, non ex eadem causâ, quâ poetis, sed ut imbecilitatis nostræ adminicula sint, et ut discentem et audientem in rem presentem adducant:" For parables, like histories, wherein we have no concern, are heard with more attention, and are so contrived as to give no offence, even though they provoke the man, to whom they are addressed, to condemn himself. "There were two men in one city, the one rich, and the other poor: And the rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds;" as David had many wives and concubines, with whom he might have well been satisfied, without violating another man's bed; "but the the poor man had nothing, save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished up." Bathsheba, very likely, was the only wife that Uriah had, with whom he was highly pleased and delighted, and she very probably with him, untill David's temptations had perverted her mind. "And it grew up together with him and with his children; it did eat of his own meat, and drink of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter." Nathan, in his resemblance, cannot be said to have surpassed the truth, considering how fond many persons were anciently, not only of lambs, but of several other creatures which they suffered to eat with them at their tables, and lie with them in their beds; and that even at this day it is a custom in Arabia, (which is contiguous to Judea) to have one of the finest lambs in the flock brought up in the house, and fed with the children. "And there came a traveller to the rich man." This denotes David's straggling appetite; which he suffered to wander from his own home, and to covet another man's wife; and of this appetite the Jewish doctors have this observation, that 'in the beginning it is but a traveller, but in time it becomes a guest, and in conclusion is the master of the house.' "And he spared to take of his own flock and his own herds, wherewith he might have satisfied his appetite, but took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the way-faring man that was come to him." Most commentators here take notice, that Nathan did not go so far in the parable, as to say any thing of the rich man's

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&c. or 4341.
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or 1070.

David accordingly condemns himself, and confesses his guilt, and humbly begs pardon for what he had done: Whereupon Nathan was sent again to inform him, that † God had pardoned his transgression, viz. the eternal punishment due to his transgression God had remitted, but the * temporal should be inflicted on him: That therefore the son (for by this time Bathsheba was brought to bed of a son) begotten in this adulterous congress, should not live; that several of his family should come to an untimely death; that some one of his sons should rise up in rebellion against him; and his own wives be defiled publicly, and in the sight of all the world, because he had given such scandal to his own people, and †² such occasion to the enemies of God to blaspheme.

killing the poor man. This certainly would have made the resemblance more complete, but it is therefore omitted, that David might not so readily apprehend Nathan's meaning, and so be induced unawares to pronounce a sentence of condemnation upon himself; whereupon the prophet had a fair opportunity to shew him, that if the rich man who took away the poor man's lamb deserved death, according to his own judgement, how much more did he deserve it, who had not only taken another man's wife, but caused him to be slain likewise by the enemies of Israel; *Patrick's Commentary*.

† It may very well be asked, how God so readily came to forgive David, when he acknowledged his transgression, and yet did not forgive Saul, though he made the like confession. I have sinned! But the answer is obvious, that be the form of expression what it will, unless it proceeds from the sincerity of the heart, the great searcher of hearts will not regard it. The true reason therefore, why Saul could not obtain a revocation of his sentence of rejection was, because his repentance was not sincere; it did not proceed from an humble and contrite spirit. At the same time that he acknowledged his sin, he desired Samuel to honour him before the people, and persisted in his disobedience ever after: Whereas David, on the contrary, humbled himself, wept and lamented for his sin, and of his penitence has left us a perpetual and eternal monument in Psalm li. "Have mercy upon me, O God, after thy great goodness; according to the multitude of thy mercies do away mine offences; wash me thoroughly from my wickedness, and cleanse me from my sin," &c.

* In the threats which God orders Nathan to denounce against David, the expressions are:—"I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house, and I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give them unto thy neighbour, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of the sun; for thou didst it secretly; but I will do this thing before all Israel and before the sun; 2 Sam. xii. 11. 12." Where the words, "I will raise up, I will take, I will do," do not denote any positive actions of God, as if he prompted wicked men to do the same things, wherewith he threatens David, insomuch that, without such prompting, they would not have done them, but by it were necessitated to do them: Such a construction as this is injurious to the divine attributes, and makes God the author of evil. But the true meaning is,—That God, at that time, saw the perverse disposition of one of his sons, and the crafty wiliness of one of his coun-

sellors, which, without restraining them, would not fail to create David no small uneasiness; and therefore, because David had violated his law, and, to gratify his lust, had committed both adultery and murder, God would not interpose, but suffered the tempers of these two wicked persons to follow their own course, and have their natural swing; whereupon the one, being ambitious of a crown, endeavours to depose his father, and the other, willing to make the breach irreparable, advised the most detested thing he could think of. This indeed was the very thing that God had foretold; but without any imputation upon his attributes, we may say, that God can so dispose and guide a train of circumstances, that the wickedness of any action shall happen in this manner rather than another, though he do not infuse into any man the will to do wickedly. "*Torrenti nequitiae, ut sic loquar, (for I give the commentator's own words, because there is something very accurate in them) nullas vires addit, sed impedit, ne hac, potius quam illac, perrumpat; circumstantiasque omnes (quæ nihil vitii in se habent) ita dirigit, et moderatur, ut certum quendam eventum consequantur. Sunt autem innumera ejusmodi circumstantiæ, quibus nihil inest mali, et quibus tamen res, pro Dei arbitrio, variantur; deoque sunt non pauciores viæ, quibus omnia regat, sine ulla virtutum suarum imminutione, et ita, ut libertatem interea peccandi aut parendi hominibus relinquat.*" So that from such Scripture phrases as these, we may not infer, that God either does, or can do evil, but only, that he permits that evil to be done, which he foreknew would be done, but might have prevented had he pleased; or, in other terms, that he suffers men, naturally wicked, to follow the bent of their tempers, without any interposition of his Providence to restrain them. *Le Clerc's Commentary*.

†² David's crime, which at first was secret, was in time discovered, and the report of it carried to the neighbouring nations. The Syrians, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Edomites, the Philistines, people whom he had subdued, and who, out of pure malice, had always a jealous eye upon his conduct, would not fail upon this occasion to murmur, and say, "How could God thus favour an adulterer and murderer? Where is his justice, and his Providence? Is this the God, who is said to be so equitable in his dealings with men, and so severe an avenger of iniquity, and yet makes choice of such a monster as this to govern his people? This is the 'David, the man after God's own heart,' whom he preferred before Saul, on whom he hath poured down innumerable blessings, and for

Nor was it long before part of this sentence began to be executed upon him: For the child which he had by Bathsheba was taken sick and died. While it was sick, David fasted and prayed, if possibly he might appease the Divine wrath, and intercede for its life; but when it was dead, he acknowledged the justice of God, and, cheerfully submitting to his will, made his ardent supplications to him, that the remainder of his afflictions might be mixed with mercy. This in some measure was done; for in a proper space of time he had another son † by Bathsheba, who was named †² Solomon, in confidence of the promise which God had made, that his reign should be crowned with peace: But this did not hinder the Divine justice from being true to its threats as well as its promises.

David had several sons, but only one daughter that we read of, whose name was Tamar, (sister to Absalom, by Maacha, the daughter of Talmi king of †³ Geshur) a princess of excellent beauty, and with whom Amnon, his eldest son by another queen, fell desperately in love, and pined away with an †⁴ hopeless desire of obtaining her; till at

whom he hath many rich promises in reserve; and yet did Saul ever commit such horrid enormities as this man has done, and still continues to be the favourite of God?" Such reflections (we may reasonably imagine) would David's transgressions have occasioned among strangers and enemies, who might thence be induced to despise a religion they were acquainted with, and which he, who should have been its main support, so little regarded. *Calmet's Commentary.*

* David's acts of humiliation for his sins are thus described by Salvian (de Gubern. Dei) "He put off his purple, threw away his royal ornaments, laid down his diadem, wholly stripped himself of his kingship, and appeared as a penitent, in a squalid, rueful garb, fasting, lying on the ground, confessing, mourning, repenting, deprecating, &c. and yet, with all his humiliation and compunction, he could not obtain a revocation of this punishment." But why should the death of this child, who, had he lived, would have been a perpetual monument of guilt, and a brand of infamy upon his parents, be accounted by David so great a punishment? The true way to account for this, is to ascribe it to David's excess of passion for Bathsheba, which so strongly attached him to every offspring of her's, and made him forget every thing in this child but that motive of endearment. Besides this, there is something in human nature, which prompts us to rate things after a manner seemingly unaccountable; and to estimate them, not according to their real worth, but according to the expence or trouble, or even the distress they cost us. Nor should it be forgot, that this excessive mourning did not proceed simply from the fear of the loss of the child, but from a deep sense of his sin, and of the Divine displeasure manifested in the child's sickness, and particularly from a just apprehension of the injury which he had done the infant by his sin, and which he thought himself bound in justice, by prayer and intercession, as much as he was able, to repair. *Patrick's Commentary*, and *Pool's Annotations.*

† It is very observable, that in the whole compass of this story, there is not a word said either of Bathsheba's guilt or punishment; but this might be, because, as to the matter of her husband's death, she was innocent: to the adultery which she committed, she

was enticed by the offers of a powerful king; and in the calamities which befel him, she, no doubt, had her share, and felt her punishment. *Patrick's Commentary.*

†² The word *Solomon* is properly derived from *Schalom*, which signifies *peace*, intimating that his reign should be *peaceable*; but, by God's appointment, Nathan gave him another name, viz. *Jedidiah*, i. e. *the beloved of God*. The Scripture, however, never calls him by this name, but only by that of Solomon: for what reason we cannot tell, unless we may suppose, that the people, being long harassed in war during his father's reign, might be pleased with this name, and use it rather than the other, to intimate their hopes and longing desire of peace. And for this reason (among others) it may be inferred, that Solomon was born after the conclusion of the Ammonitish war, though the Sacred History takes occasion, from the death of Bathsheba's first-born, to relate that event first. Not long after this, David had another son by Bathsheba, (2 Sam. v. 14. and 1 Chron. iii. 5.) whom he called Nathan, after the name of the prophet; and of these two Christ was born, though in different lines: For Joseph, his supposed father, came from Solomon, as Matthew (chap. i. ver. 6, 7.) relates it; and Mary, his real mother, came from Nathan, as it is in St Luke, chap. iii. ver. 31. *Le Clerc's Commentary*, and *Bedford's Scripture Chronology*, lib. v. c. 4.

†³ The borders of the Geshurites and Maacathites (as we read Josh. xiii. 11, 13.) were given by Moses to the Israelites that seated themselves on the east of Jordan; nevertheless "the children of Israel expelled not the Geshurites and Maacathites, but they dwelt among the Israelites unto this day:" From whence it is evident, that the cities of Geshur and Maacah, the two capitals of two small kingdoms, lay within the borders of the land of Israel: And though it does not appear how they were situated in respect of each other, yet it is certain, that they both lay on the south side of Mount Libanus, in the north part of the half tribe of Manasseh, and on the east side of the river Jordan. *Wells's Geography of the Old Testament*, vol. iii.

†⁴ Virgins of the blood royal were kept seclude in

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&c. or 4341.
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or 1070.

length, by the advice and contrivance of Jonadab, his intimate friend, and † cousin-german, he found means to decoy her into his apartment, where, †² notwithstanding all her intreaties and expostulations with him, he first ravished her, and when his brutish passion was satisfied, in a sullen humour †³ bid her be gone; and when she remonstrated the ill usage, had her turned out by main force.

* In this mournful and distracted condition Tamar repairs to her brother Absalom,

apartments separate from the commerce of men, into which not only strangers, but even their own fathers, were not permitted to enter. Amnon, however, at some time or other, had seen the beautiful Tamar, or otherwise he could not have conceived so strong a passion for her. Upon some certain ceremonial occasions indeed, it was customary for the young women to walk out, and shew themselves; but, considering their close confinement at other times, it was hardly possible for Amnon to find an opportunity of declaring his passion, much more of gratifying it; and therefore, out of pure despair, he pined himself into a consumption. *Calmet's Commentary.*

† Jonadab was the son of Shimeah, the brother of David.

†² There is something so moving, and the arguments are so strong, in Tamar's speech to Amnon, that one would almost wonder why it did not prevail with him to desist. "Nay, my brother, do not force me." Here she reminds him of his relation to her, for which she hoped he would have such a reverence as not to meddle with her, though she herself were willing, much less to offer violence to her, which it was abominable to do even to a stranger, much more to one of the same blood. "For no such thing ought to be done in Israel." Whatever other nations did, who had not the knowledge of God's laws, she begs of him to consider that they both belonged to a nation which was God's peculiar people, had been instructed better, and therefore should act otherwise. "Do not thou this folly." She prays him (besides the scandal it would give) to recollect with himself on the heinousness of the crime, and how highly offensive it would be to the Divine Majesty. "And I, whither shall I cause my shame to go?" She beseeches him (besides the sin against God) to consider the disgrace it would be to her, who, after such a foul act, must be ashamed to look any one in the face. "And as for thee, thou shalt be as one of the fools in Israel." Lastly, She puts him in mind of his own reputation, which so vile an action would tarnish for ever, and make him be looked upon as a man void of all sense, religion, honour, and humanity. "Now therefore, I pray thee, speak to the king; for he will not withhold me from thee." It is a common opinion among the Jewish doctors, that in the war which king David had with the king of Geshur, he took Maacah, his daughter, captive, and (as they fancy their law allows, Deut. xxi. 11.) lay with her for once only, and then begat this daughter; but that, upon her becoming a proselyte to the Jewish religion, he married her, and afterwards had Absalom. Tamar therefore being born while her mother was a Gentile, they suppose that she was not David's legal child,

and that Amnon consequently might marry her: But all this is meer talk, without any shadow of proof. The most probable opinion is, that she was neither ignorant of the law, (Levit. xviii. 11.) which prohibited such incestuous marriages, nor thought her father's power so great as that he might dispense with the law upon this occasion, but merely that she said any thing which she thought would please him, to stop his solicitations and rude attempt, and to escape for the present out of his hands. *Patrick's Commentary, and Jewish Antiq. lib. vii. c. 8.*

†³ Interpreters seem to be at a great loss to find out the reason why Amnon's love to his sister should so soon be converted into such an hatred, as to make him act so rudely, so brutally towards her; but it is no uncommon thing for men of violent and irregular passions to pass from one extreme to another. The shame which accompanies every base action, the remorse, and repentance, and many bad consequences that immediately pursue it, make a recoil in every man's temper; and therefore it is no wonder that a libidinous young man, who would not spare so much as his own sister, should, after fruition, and when the ardour of his lust was satisfied, be seized with a contrary passion, and hate the object he loved so much before, when he came coolly to compare the pleasure and the sin together, the shortness of the one, and the heinousness of the other. He hated his sister when he should have hated himself; and, as this outrageous treatment of her made it impossible for his guilt to be concealed, so God seems to have abandoned him to the tumult of his intemperate mind, on purpose to make this punishment of David's adultery more flagrant, and the prophet's prediction of "raising up evil to him out of his own house," 2 Sam. xii. 11. more conspicuous. *Calmet's and Le Clerc's Commentaries, and The History of the Life of King David.*

* The manner of Tamar's signifying her vexation for the injury and disgrace which her brother had put upon her, is expressed by her "putting ashes upon her head," 2 Sam. xiii. 19. and that this was an ancient custom whereby to denote one's grief and concern for any great loss or calamity, is evident from that passage of the prophet, concerning the people of Tyre: "They shall cry bitterly, cast dirt upon their heads, and wallow themselves in the ashes," Ezekiel xxvii. 30. From Achilles's behaviour upon the death of Patroclus, as we have it in Homer:

Ἀμφοτέρῃσι δὲ χερσὶν ἑλὼν κόπιν αἰθαλοῦσσαν
Χύατο κακὴ κεφαλῇ χάριεν δ' ἠσχυε πρόσωπον.

Iliad, xviii.

and tells him the whole transaction of her rape : But her brother, though naturally a man of an high spirit, advised her to be silent in point of prudence, because her ravisher was heir apparent to the crown ; and himself so † artfully concealed his own resentment, that every one believed he had taken no notice of it. But about two years after, under the pretence of a sheep-shearing entertainment, (which in those countries used to be attended with great mirth and jollity), he invited his friends and relations, and, with the king's consent (though himself declined going), all the princes of the blood, and more especially his brother Amnon, to his country-seat at Hazor ; where, while they were engaged in feasting and drinking, his servants, by his direction, and through the promise of an impunity, fell upon Amnon (as Absalom gave the signal) and immediately dispatched him. This put the rest of the princes into such a consternation, that they made the best of their way from the house, as expecting the like fate ; and the king, when he heard the first news of the thing, (supposing that Absalom had killed all the rest of his brothers) was thrown into the utmost grief and despair, till, by the information of Jonadab (who seems to have been privy to the design), and the safe arrival of the other princes, he was certified that Amnon only was dead ; but his death alone was matter of sorrow and lamentation enough.

Absalom, who knew very well how highly his father would resent this treacherous and barbarous murder, †² fled to his mother's relations, and was entertained by his grandfather Talmai, at Geshur, for three years. But length of time having worn out David's grief, and Joab, perceiving that he had a secret desire to see Absalom again, (if he could but find out an handsome excuse for such a purpose), procured a good artful woman †³ from Tekoah, who, †⁴ in a speech which he had contrived for her, was to con-

From 2 Sam.
i. to xix.

And from what Mezentius did, upon the death of his Lausus, according to Virgil :

Canitiem immundo deformat pulvere, et ambas

Ad cœlum tendit palmas.—Æneid. x.

† By this means Amnon was lulled asleep into a belief, that Absalom would not trouble him for what he had done, because he did not threaten, nor so much as expostulate with him, or take any notice of what had passed, though, in reason, he ought to have been more afraid that he was meditating a terrible revenge : according to the lesson which the mouse gave her young one, when she perceived her affrighted at the noise of the crowing cock, but regardless of the sly approaches of the cat, viz. “ That there was no danger to be feared from the fluttering cock, but from the silent cat—present death.” *Patrick's Commentary*.

†² In the case of wilful murder, the law is,—“ That the avenger of blood shall slay the murderer ; when he meeteth him he shall slay him,” Numb. xxxv. 21. From whence it seems to follow, that it was not in any man's power to protect the wilful murderer, because the avenger of blood, i. e. the nearest relation of the person murdered, might, with impunity, wherever he met him, kill him. As Absalom therefore had committed a designed murder, his own life was every moment in danger ; and as there were no cities of refuge in his own country, that, in this case, would yield him protection, he was forced to flee out of the kingdom to his mother's father. *Patrick's Commentary*.

†³ Tekoah was a city in the tribe of Judah, which lay south of Jerusalem, and about twelve miles distant from it. And herein does Joab's cunning appear

not a little, that he made choice of a woman rather than a man, because women can more easily express their passions, and sooner gain pity in their miseries ; a widow, which was a condition of life proper to move compassion ; a grave woman, (as Josephus calls her) which made her better fitted for addressing the king ; and a woman not known at Jerusalem, but living at some distance in the country, that the case which she was to represent might not too readily be enquired into. *Pool's Annotations*.

†⁴ The art and contrivance of this widow of Tekoah's speech is very remarkable. “ When the woman of Tekoah spake to the king, she fell on her face to the ground, and did obeisance, and said, Help, O king ! And the king said to her, What aileth thee ? And she said, I am indeed a widow woman, and my husband is dead, and thy handmaid had two sons, and they two strove together in the field, and there was none to part them, but the one smote the other and slew him ; and behold the whole family is risen against thine handmaid, and they say, Deliver him that smote his brother, that we may kill him, for the life of his brother whom he slew, and we will destroy the heir also : And so they shall quench my coal that is left (i. e. deprive me of the little comfort of my life which remains, and is, as it were, a coal buried in the ashes), and leave to my husband neither name nor remainder upon the earth,” 2 Sam. xiv. 4, &c. Now the scope of all this speech was to frame a case, as like to David's as she could devise, that, by prevailing with him to determine it in her favour, he might be convinced how much more reasonable it was to preserve Absalom. But, how plausible soever the likeness might be, there was a wide difference between her case and his :

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vince the king that in some cases the life of a murderer might be saved. The woman Joab introduced; and when she had told her tale, so as to induce the king to a compliance with her feigned petition, she gave him at length to know, that the case she had been stating was Absalom's; and that, if to a private man the king was disposed to be merciful, there was much more reason for his pardoning his own son, whose absence the people lamented, and for whom they had so general an affection.

The king, being apprised that Joab had put the woman upon this artifice, ordered him to recal Absalom, but † confined him to live in his own house, and, as yet, would not seem so far reconciled to him as to admit him into his presence. But at the end of two years, Absalom prevailed with Joab to intercede farther for a full pardon, and to introduce him to the king, who, upon his humbling himself and begging pardon, took him up from the ground where he lay prostrate, and gave him a kiss, as a token of his forgiveness and royal favour.

Absalom was certainly one of the most comely persons in all Israel, without the least blemish from top to toe, and with an head of hair (which in those days was thought a great beauty) prodigiously long and thick, so that his person drew every one's eye to him, as soon as he was restored to favour at court. But as Amnon, his eldest brother, was slain, and Chileah, his second, by this time dead, he began to look upon himself as presumptive heir to the crown, and thereupon to affect a state and equipage greater than usual. He provided himself with chariots and horses, and had a guard of fifty men to attend his person: But notwithstanding this, he would be * so obsequious and humble, as to stoop to the meanest people that had any thing to say to him; would offer his service to solicit every one's cause that had any business at court; and, upon proper occasions, not fail to instil into the people's minds a bad opinion of the present administration, as if the public affairs were neglected, but that, if he were at the helm, things should be conducted at an other-guise rate.

†² By these arts and insinuations, which were advantageously seconded by the come-

For her son (as she pretended) was slain in a scuffle with his brother; whereas Amnon was taken off by a premeditated murder. He was slain in the field, where there were no witnesses whether the fact was wilfully done or no; whereas all the king's sons saw Amnon barbarously murdered by his brother: And, lastly, he was her only son, by whom alone she could hope to have her husband's name perpetuated; whereas David's family was in no danger of being extinct, even though he had given up Absalom to justice. But there was a great deal of policy in not making the similitude too close and visible, lest the king should perceive the drift of the woman's petition, before she had obtained a grant of pardon for her son, and came to make the application to the king: And though, upon her making the application, the king might have argued the disparity of the two cases, yet he thought proper to wave this, and admit her reasoning to be good, because he was as desirous to have Absalom recalled as were any of his subjects. *Patrick's Commentary.*

† This small severity to Absalom, small in comparison of the heinousness of his crime, David might think necessary, not only to put him upon a sincere humiliation and repentance for what he had done, when he found that the king (indulgent as he was) had not fully pardoned him; but to convince the people likewise, how detestable his crime was in the king's esteem, and how averse he would be to pass by the

like in another person, who could not endure the sight of a son, whose hand was defiled with a brother's blood. *Patrick's Commentary.*

* It is an observation of Plato, that, when any one intends to make himself a tyrant in a popular state, he no sooner enters on the government, but προσγελᾷ, τὲ καὶ ἀσπάζεται τὰς αἰ, ὅς ἂν περιτυγχάνει, "he smiles upon, and kindly salutes all sorts of people, wherever he meets them;" avowing, that he hates tyranny, promising great things both in private and public, καὶ πᾶσιν ἴλεος τὲ καὶ πατρῷος εἶναι προσποιεῖται, and making, as if he would be mild, and gentle, and fatherly to all; even as Tacitus relates of Otho, that "protendens manum, adorare vulgum, jacere oscula, et omnia serviliter pro dominatione;" that he used to kiss and shake hands with any one, court and adore the mob, and do every little servile thing to get possession of the government. *Plato de Repub. l. 8. and Tacit. Hist. lib. i.*

†² It is an observation of Aristotle in his politics, (lib. v. c. 4.) that all changes and revolutions in government are made by one of these two ways, ὅτε μὲν διὰ βίας ὅτε δὲ δι' ἀπάτης, "either by force and violence, or else by deceit and craft:" Nor ever was there a man better formed by nature to manage matters in this latter way than was Absalom, who was a person of courage and gallantry, of civility and courtesy, young, and wonderfully beautiful, descended from kings both by father's and mother's side, and prodig-

liness of his person (as we said), and the familiarity of his address, he gained to himself the affections of the people, and insensibly alienated them from David. † When therefore he imagined that matters were ripe for his purpose, he desired leave of his father to go to Hebron, pretending that he had vowed a vow in his exile, that, whenever it should please God to bring him back to Jerusalem, he would offer, in that place, a solemn sacrifice of thanksgiving. The king, little suspecting his hidden design, and being desirous that all religious services should be punctually performed, gave him free leave to go, and wished him a good journey. Hebron was the place of his own nativity, and where the royal seat had been in the beginning of David's reign; and therefore he thought it the properest for his wicked enterprise: And no sooner was he settled there, but he sent his emissaries about to sound the inclinations of the several tribes, and to exhort those, whom they should gain over to his party, to be ready to take up arms † as soon as they should hear that he was proclaimed king.

This occasioned a general insurrection. Absalom was the nation's darling; and upon this summons, †² people flocked to him from every part: So that David, who had intel-

From 2 Sam.
i. to xix.

gal enough of large and magnificent promises, if ever he came to be king; a character not unlike that of Turnus in Virgil:

Hunc decus egregium formæ movet, atque juvenæ,
Hunc atavi reges, hunc claris dextera factis.

Æneid. lib. vii.

‡ This is said in the text to have been "after forty years," 2 Sam. xv. 7.; but where to date the beginning of the forty years, has occasioned much disagreement among commentators. Some compute them from the time that the Israelites demanded a king of Samuel; others, from the first time that David was anointed king; others, from the first commencement of his reign over Judah; and others again, from the time that he took possession of the whole kingdom. The two latter of these opinions are insupportable, because David reigned but forty years in all, and was now so hail and hearty, as to be able to walk on foot; whereas, in the latter end of his life, he was very infirm and bed-ridden. The learned Usher, indeed, makes these forty years to commence from the time of David's first unction; that therefore he was three-score years old when this rebellion broke out, and lived ten years after it: But (with all due deference to so great authority) both this, and the other opinion, that computes from the time that the demand of a king was made, are forced, and unnatural; have no affinity to the text, nor do they suggest any reason why the sacred historian should begin his account of this unnatural rebellion, with an "And it came to pass, that after forty years:" Whereas, if we consider the account of what went before, how Absalom, by all the arts of popularity, a splendid equipage, condescending behaviour, large promises, and flattering speeches, had alienated the hearts of the people from his father, we cannot but be tempted to think, that there is an error crept into the text; that instead of "Arbaim, forty," as our copies have it, the word should be "Arba, four" only, i. e. four years after that Absalom was re-established in Jerusalem, and had used all his alluring arts to gain the nation's affections, the first step that he took, was to go to Hebron. This makes the sense easy and entire, and is confirmed by the authority of the Syriac and Arabic

versions, the judgment of several able critics, and the testimony of Josephus himself, whose words are μετὰ δὲ τοῦ τοῦ πατρὸς καταλαγὴν τεσσαρῶν ἔτων ἥδε παρελευθίπων, that "four years after his father was reconciled to him," this conspiracy broke out. Calmet's Commentary, Howell's History, in the Notes, and Josephus's Jewish Antiquities, lib. vii. c. 8.

† The expression in the text is, "as soon as you hear the sound of the trumpet," 2 Sam. xv. 10. which looks as if Absalom had planted trumpeters at proper distances to take the sound from one another, and disperse it over all the kingdom, that so they, who were lovers of his cause, might instantly resort to his assistance and support; to which they were encouraged, no doubt, by the suggestions of his emissaries, who might persuade the people, that all this was done by the king's consent and approbation, who, being aged and infirm himself, was willing to resign his kingdom to his eldest and most noble son, who was descended from a king by both parents. Le Clerc's Commentary, and Pool's Annotations.

†² It would really make one wonder, how any people could so easily abandon a prince, so brave, so happy, and successful as David had been; how they could forget his excellent qualities, or be unmindful of the services he had done the nation; but for this there may be some reasons assigned. In every nation there are always some turbulent and discontented spirits, who are uneasy with the present state of things, and promise themselves some benefit from a change. Saul's party was not as yet entirely extinct, and Joab, who was David's prime minister, behaved with an insufferable pride and insolence. His crimes, which were very black, and which the king durst not punish, redounded upon him; and the king himself had given his enemies umbrage enough against him, in living with Bathsheba, after he had murdered her husband: But what gave the fairest pretence of all, was the obstruction of justice in the civil administration: For had there not been something of this, Absalom could have had no grounds for making so loud complaints. These were some of the causes of so general a revolt in the people; and yet, after all, there might be something in what Abarbinel ima-

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ligence of all this, thought it not safe for him to continue any longer in Jerusalem †, but, leaving the place with a design to retire beyond Jordan, he was attended by his guards, his best troops, and principal friends. Zadok and Abiathar the priests, understanding that the king was departed from Jerusalem, brought the ark of the covenant to accompany him in his distress; but †² he desired them to carry it back, and to continue in Jerusalem, because they might be of use to gain him intelligence of the enemies motions and designs, and their character was too sacred to fear any violence from the usurper. Hushai, †³ the Archite, his faithful friend and counsellor, came likewise to attend him, and with all expressions of sorrow, to see his royal master in such distress, offered to share his fortune: But David enjoined him to return, and told him, that he would be more serviceable to him in the city, by pretending to adhere to Absalom, and by defeating the counsels of Ahitophel, who, as he understood for certainty, was †⁴ engaged in his son's measures, and whose great abilities (which the king was not unacquainted with) gave him no small uneasiness.

David had scarce passed over Mount Olivet, which lies to the east of Jerusalem, when Ziba, whom he had made steward to Mephibosheth his friend Jonathan's son, came and

gines, viz. That neither Absalom, nor the elders of Israel, nor the rest of the people who were misled by them, had any intention to divest David of his crown and dignity, much less to take away his life; but only to substitute Absalom, as coadjutor to him, for the execution of the royal authority during his life-time, and to be his successor after his death. For, as it would have been monstrously wicked in Absalom to have designed the destruction of so kind a father, so it is hard to conceive, how he could have gained to his party such a multitude of abettors in so villainous an interprise. This however we may observe, that David looked upon their proceedings (2 Sam. xv. 14. and xvi. 11.) as an attempt upon his life; and that (whatever their first intentions were) they came at last to a resolution to have him killed, to make way for their own better security: which may be a sufficient warning to all men, never to begin any thing that is wrong, for fear that it should lead them to the commission of that which they at first abhorred, when they find they cannot be safe in one wickedness without perpetrating a greater. *Calmet's* and *Patrick's* Commentaries.

† Though the fort of Sion was very strong and impregnable, yet there are several reasons which might induce David to quit Jerusalem. He had not laid in provisions for a long siege, nor was Jerusalem in every part of it defensible; and if Absalom had once taken it, as it was the capital, he would soon have been master of the whole kingdom. There was some reason to suspect likewise, that the inhabitants were faulty, and so much addicted to the contrary party, that had he stood a siege, and been reduced to straits, they might possibly deliver him up to Absalom. Nor was the preservation of the city itself, which David had beautified and adorned with a fine and stately palace, and where God had appointed to put his name and worship, the least part of his concern; and therefore he thought it more conducive to his interest in all respects, rather than be cooped up in a place which he desired to preserve from being the seat of war, to march abroad into the country, where he

might probably raise a considerable army, both for his own defence, and the suppression of the rebels. *Pool's* Annotations.

†² This he might do for several reasons; for either he might think it not decent to have the ark wander about with him he knew not whither, and to expose it to all the hazards and inconveniences which he himself was like to undergo; or he might suppose, that this would be a means to expose the priests to the violence of Absalom's rage, (as he had before exposed them to Saul's fury upon another occasion), if God, in his judgment, should permit him to prevail; or this might look as a distrust of the Divine goodness, and that he placed more confidence in the token of God's presence than he did in God himself, who had preserved him in the long persecution of Saul, when he had no ark with him. But what seems the chief reason at that time for his sending back the ark, was,—That the priests and Levites, (of whose fidelity he was sufficiently satisfied) by giving him intelligence of the enemies motions, might do him more service in Jerusalem than they could do in his camp. *Pool's* Annotations.

†³ This man might be of the ancient race of the Archites, descendants from Canaan, of whom Moses speaks, Gen. x. 17. but since the name of these ancient people is differently written, I should rather think that this additional name was given him from the place of his nativity, viz. Archi, a town situated on the frontiers of Benjamin and Ephraim, to the west of Bethel, Josh. xvi. 2.

†⁴ The Jews are of opinion that Ahitophel was incensed against David, and therefore ready to go over to the adverse party, because he had abused Bathsheba, whom they take to have been his grand-daughter, because she was the daughter of Eliam, 2 Sam. xi. 3. and Ahitophel had a son of that name, 2 Sam. xxiii. 34. for this reason they imagine that he advised Absalom to lie with his father's concubines, that he might be repaid in kind; though the Scripture assigns another, viz. that he and his father might thereby become irreconcilable enemies. *Pool's* Annotations.

presented him with a † considerable quantity of wine, and other provisions ; but upon the king's enquiring for his master, who he thought above all men, in point of gratitude, should have kept firm to his interest, the perfidious wretch accused him of staying behind in Jerusalem, in hopes that himself might be made king ; and the too credulous king, in this general distraction of his affairs, believing the accusation to be true, made an hasty grant of all Mephibosheth's estate to this base servant and treacherous sycophant.

From 2 Sam.
i. to xix.

As David drew near to Bahurim, a city in the tribe of Benjamin, † one Shimei, a descendant from the family of Saul, and who dwelt in that place, came out and threw stones at him, and, in the hearing of the whole company, loaded him with the bitterest reproaches and execrations, so that Abishai desired leave of the king to go and dispatch the insolent rebel : But by no means would the king permit him, but bore all with an admirable patience †² and resignation to the will of God, as being conscious of his own guilt in the case of Uriah, and of the Divine justice in thus afflicting him.

While David continued at Bahurim, Absalom and his party entering Jerusalem, were received with the general acclamations of the people, and Hushai, not forgetful of the king's instructions, went to compliment him, and offered him his service. Absalom knew that he was his father's intimate friend and counsellor, and therefore bantered him at first upon his pretending to desert his old master ; but Hushai †³ excused himself in such a manner, and answered all his questions with that subtilty, that he passed upon the prince for a worthy friend, and accordingly was received into his privy-council.

A council was presently called, wherein Ahitophel, who was president, and stood highest in Absalom's esteem, spake first ; and the two chief things which he advised him to do, were, first to place a tent on the top of the palace, (for by this time he had taken possession of his father's palace), and to lie publicly with his father's concubines,

† And yet the text tells us, it was but one bottle : But what we render bottle, was in those times a bag, or vessel made of leather, which might contain a great deal of wine ; because we cannot suppose but that the liquor was proportionate to the rest of the present. *Patrick's Commentary.*

† Whether this man had been a personal sufferer in the fall of Saul's family, or what else had exasperated him against David, it no where appears ; but it seems as if he had conceived some very heinous offence against him, when neither the presence of a king, nor the terror of his guards, could restrain him from throwing stones and bitter speeches at him : And it looks as if the king were fallen into the utmost contempt, when one private man could think of venting his malice at him, in so gross a manner, with impunity. *Howell's History*, in the Notes.

†² The words of David upon this occasion are, " So let him curse, because the Lord hath said unto him, curse David : Let him alone, let him curse, for the Lord hath bidden him ;" not that God commanded it by his word, for that severely forbids cursing, *Exod. xxii. 28*, nor moved him to it by his Spirit, for neither was that possible, because " God tempteth no man," *James i. 13*. But the meaning is, that the secret Providence of God did over-rule, and determine him so to do, i. e. God did not put any wickedness into Shimei's heart, (for he had of himself an heart full of malignity and venom against David), but only left him to his own wickedness ; took away that com-

mon prudence which would have restrained him from so dangerous an action ; directed his malice, that it should be exercised against David, rather than any other man ; and brought him into so distressed a condition, that he might seem a proper object of his scorn and contempt, which is enough to justify the expression, " The Lord hath bidden him ;" in the same manner that we read of " his commanding the ravens," *1 Kings xvii. 4*. and sometimes inanimate creatures, *Psal. cxlvii. 15. 18*. The short is, David looked upon Shimei as an instrument in God's hands, and therefore took all his abuses patiently, out of a consciousness of his sinfulness, and a reverence to that Deity, who had brought him so low as to deserve the insults of this vile Benjamite. *Pool's Annotations.*

†³ The manner in which Josephus makes Hushai answer Absalom is artful enough, though hardly becoming an honest man. " There is no contending (says he) with the will of God, and the consent of the people ; and so long as you have them on your side, you may be secure of my fidelity. It is from God that you have received your kingdom ; and if you can think me worthy of a place in the number of those you will vouchsafe to own, you shall find me as true to yourself as ever I was to your father. No man is to account the present state of things uneasy, so long as the government continues in the same line, and a son of the same family succeeds to the throne." *Jewish Antiq. lib. vii. c. 8.*

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that all the soldiers might see, and conclude that, after such an indignity, there could be no hopes of a reconciliation, and thereby be incited to fight more desperately to secure him in the possession of the throne. This advice was suitable perhaps to the young man's vicious inclinations, and therefore he delayed not to put it in execution: But, as for the second thing which Ahitophel proposed, viz. "To take twelve thousand choice men, and pursue after David that * very night, and to fall upon his guards, which were fatigued with their march, and unable to make resistance, and so surprise the king and kill him," he desired to consult Hushai herein; who, seeming not to slight Ahitophel's proposal, advised rather to delay the attempt until he had got all the forces of the kingdom together. "For as David and his men were known to be brave, and at that time both † exasperated and desperate, in case they should worst the party sent against them, this would be a means to discourage others, and be thought a very inauspicious beginning: whereas, if they staid till a numerous army were come together, †² they might be assured of victory." Absalom and the rest of the council approved of this last advice, and Hushai immediately dispatched two messengers to David, acquainting him with what had passed in council, and advising him instantly to pass the Jordan, lest Absalom should change his mind, and come and fall upon him on a sudden.

The messengers, as they were making the best of their way, happened to meet some of Absalom's party, but had the good fortune to conceal themselves in a well, until their pursuers were returned; and then proceeding on their journey, came and delivered their dispatches to the king, who decamped by break of day, passed the Jordan, and came to Mahanaim, a city of Gilead, where he was kindly received. As soon as Ahitophel heard that David was out of danger, either taking it amiss that his counsel was slighted, or perceiving, by Absalom's weak conduct, that things were not likely to succeed, and he consequently *² liable to be exposed to David's hottest indignation, for the

* It is a wise observation in Tacitus, "*Nihil in discordiis civilibus festinatione lætius, ubi facto, potius quam consulto opus est.*" Ahitophel therefore thought it highly necessary to make dispatch upon this occasion; because he knew, that if he should give the people, that had revolted from their allegiance, leisure to think of what they were doing against their lawful prince, he would give that prince time to raise some regular troops, and those that were about him space to recover from their first fright; Absalom's party would dwindle into nothing, and David's grow stronger and stronger: "*Daret malorum pœnitentiæ, daret honorum consensui: scelera impetu, bona concilia morâ valescere.*" *Tacit. Hist. lib. i.* And therefore he advised marching immediately against him, without giving him a moment's time to recover himself. *Calmet's Commentary.*

† There is something very plausible and elegant too in the advice which Hushai gives Absalom, not immediately to pursue and fall upon David; "Thou knowest thy father and his men, that they be mighty men, and they be chafed in their minds as a bear robbed of her whelps in the field," 2 Sam. xvii. 8. Every one knows that a bear is a very fierce creature; but she-bears (as Aristotle tells us) are more fierce than the male, particularly when they have young ones,—but most of all when these young ones are taken from them. For this reason the Scripture makes frequent use of this similitude: "I will be unto them as a lion," says God, in relation to the people of Israel, "and as a leopard by the way; I will meet them as a

bear that is bereaved of her whelps, and will rent the caul of their hearts," Hosea xiii. 7, 8. Vid. Prov. xvii. 12, &c. So that the purport of Hushai's advice is founded on this maxim,—"That we should not drive an enemy to despair, nor attack those who are resolved to sell their lives at as dear a rate as possible." *Calmet's Commentary.*

†² The benefits which Hushai suggests, from Absalom's having a large army, are thus expressed in an hyperbolical way, suitable to the genius of that insolent young man, to whom he gave his advice, and therefore more likely to prevail with him: "Moreover, if he be gotten into a city, then shall all Israel bring ropes to that city, and we will draw it into the river, until there be not one small stone found there," 2 Sam. xvii. 13. Where his meaning is, that if David should quit the open field, and betake himself to the strongest of their cities, encompassed with high walls and deep ditches, such a numerous army (as he proposed) would be sufficient to begirt it round, and, by ropes put about the walls, draw them down, and all the houses of the city into the ditch that ran about it: not that any such practice was ever used in war; and therefore the words must be looked upon as merely thrasonical, and calculated to please Absalom; unless we will say with some, that the word in the original may denote such machines as are worked by ropes, and were at that time in use to batter down walls. *Calmet's and Patrick's Commentaries.*

*² Josephus thus relates the matter:—"When Ahitophel was come home to Galmon, he called his fa-

counsel he had already given; partly out of pride, and partly out of fear of worse torments, he went to his own house, where he first made his will, and then hanged himself. From 2 Sam. i. to xix.

David had not been long at Mahanaim before Absalom, having got together a numerous army, which was commanded by Amasa, the son of Ithra, a relation of Absalom's by marriage, left Jerusalem, and passed the Jordan in pursuit of his father. The king hearing of the approach of his rebel son, and foreseeing that a battle was unavoidable, divided his army into three bodies. The first to be commanded by Joab, the second by his brother Abishai, and the third by † Ittai the Gittite, and himself intended to go in person with them: but by the importunity of the people about him, he was prevailed with not to hazard his person in battle; and perhaps was more easily dissuaded from it, because the battle was to be against a son, for whom he still retained so tender an affection, that he gave the three generals a strict charge, in the hearing of the soldiers, that (for his sake) they should use Absalom kindly, in case he should fall into their hands.

The two armies met in the †² wood of Ephraim, which belongeth to the tribe of Manasseh, where Absalom's army, though much superior in number, was defeated, and put to flight: for the loyalists, upon this occasion, behaved so gallantly, that they killed †³ twenty thousand of the rebels upon the spot, and would doubtlessly have carried the slaughter farther, had not Absalom (the chief cause of all this mischief) been taken and slain.

His hair (as we said before) was of a prodigious length and largeness; and as he was now in flight from the enemy, and riding with great speed under the trees, it happened to * entangle itself on one of the boughs in such a manner, that it lifted him off his

mily together, and told them the advice which he had given Absalom, but that he would not follow it, and that in a short time that refusal would be his ruin; for David would certainly baffle him, and soon recover his kingdom. Now it is more honourable for me, says he, to die, asserting my liberty like a man, than to wait sneaking till David comes in again, and to be flayed at last for the services I have done the son against the father." *Jewish Antiq.* lib. vii. c. 9.

† In 2 Sam. xv. 18. we read, that "all the Gittites, six hundred men, which came after him, (viz. David) from Gath, passed on before the king;" but who those Gittites were, it is hard to determine, because we have no mention made of them in any other part of Scripture. Some imagine that they were natives of Gath, who, taken with the fame of David's piety and happy successes, came along with Ittai, (whom the Jews suppose to have been the son of Achish, king of Gath) and being proselyted to the Jewish religion, became part of David's guard, and attended him in his wars. But others rather think, that they were men of Jewish extract, but had this additional name from their fleeing unto David (probably under the conduct of Ittai) while he was at Gath, and accompanying him ever after, not only in the time of Saul's persecution of him, but even after his accession to the united kingdoms of Judah and Israel. *Patrick's Commentary.*

†² This wood was so called, (as some imagine) because the Ephramites were wont to drive their cattle over Jordan to feed them in it; but others (with more probability) suppose, that it had its name from the great slaughter (related in Judg. xii.) which Jephthah had formerly made of the Ephramites in that place. *Howell's Hist.* in the Notes.

†³ The expression in the text is, "The wood devoured more people that day than the sword devoured," 2 Sam. xviii. 8. which some think was occasioned by their falling into pits, pressing one another to death in strait places, creeping into lurking holes, and there being starved to death, or otherwise devoured by wild beasts, which met them in their flight: But the most easy and simple meaning of the passage is, that there were more slain in the wood, than in the field of battle. The field of battle (as Josephus tells us, *Jewish Antiq.* lib. vii. cap. 9.) was a plain, with a wood contiguous to it; and therefore, when Absalom's army was put to the rout, and betook themselves to the wood for refuge, their pursuers made a greater slaughter of them there than they otherwise would have done, because they could not run away so fast in the wood as they might have done in the open field. *Patrick's Commentary.*

* The words in the text, indeed, make no mention of Absalom's hair in this place: They only inform us, that "Absalom rode upon a mule, and that mule went under the thick boughs of a great oak, and his head caught hold of the oak, and he was taken up between the heaven and the earth, and the mule* that was under him went away," 2 Sam. xviii. 9. From whence some infer, that the meaning of the historian is, not that Absalom hung by his hair, but that his neck was so wedged between the boughs, by the swift motion of the mule, that he was not able to disengage himself. For it is hardly to be questioned, say they, but that when he went to battle, he had an helmet on; and an helmet, which covered his head, would have hindered his hair from being entangled in the boughs: but it is only supposing, either that his

A. M. 2948, saddle, and his mule running from under him, left him there hanging in the air, and
 &c. or 4341. unable to disengage himself.
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In this condition a private soldier found him, and told it unto Joab, who blamed him for not having killed him; and when the man in excuse urged the command which he heard the king give the generals, to be very tender and careful of his son's life, Joab, looking upon all this as nothing, or as a command fitter for a parent than a king, went to the place where he was * hanging, and having first given him his death's wound himself, ordered the people, which were by, to dispatch him; and so went, and sounded a retreat to prevent any farther effusion of blood, and to give Absalom's party an opportunity of escaping to their respective homes.

Thus died the wicked and rebellious Absalom; and instead of an honourable interment, fit for a king's son, his body was taken down, and thrown into a pit, and covered with an *² heap of stones.

THE OBJECTION.

“THIS indeed was the woeful end of David's favourite son and heir; but to his own misconduct the father might impute the irregularities of his children, since, either by an over-weening fondness to them, a tacit connivance at what they did amiss, or an exemplary encouragement given to it by himself, he suffered iniquity to abound among them. For, after his adultery with Uriah's wife, (and yet one would think he had women

helmet was such, as left a great deal of his hair visible and uncovered, or that, if it was large enough to enclose the whole, he might, upon this occasion, throw it off (as well as his other heavy armour), to make himself lighter, and expedite his flight; and then there will be no incongruity in the common and received opinion, to which the authority of Josephus adds some confirmation, viz. “That as Absalom was making his escape, upon the whiffing of the air, a snagged bough of a tree took hold of his hair, and the mule, running forward from under him, left him dangling in the air.” *Jewish Antiq.* lib. viii. c. 9.

* Commentators have observed the justice of God in bringing Absalom to a condign punishment, and such a kind of death as was ordained by the law for offences like unto his. For whereas, in the first place, he was hanged as it were, this was declared by the law to be an accursed death, Deut. xxi. 23. and was afterwards, in some measure, stoned: this was the particular kind of death that the law prescribed for a stubborn and rebellious son, Deut. xxi. 21.*

* In the description of the Holy Land, some geographers tell us, that this heap of stones remained even to their days, and that all travellers, as they passed by it, were wont to throw a stone to add to the heap, in detestation of his rebellion against his father. For though it became a custom among the Greeks to raise an heap of stones in the place where any great person was interred, as a monument of honour and respect; yet it is plain, that none of David's

army intended any honour to Absalom's memory in accumulating stones upon him; nor can we think that David himself (though too fond of this rebel son) made any alteration afterwards in the form of his burial, for fear of enraging the people against him. Some, however, are of a quite contrary opinion, viz. that David, who lamented him with such excess, removed him from this pit, in order to have him laid in the sepulchre belonging to the kings, or perhaps somewhere about the place where the monument which goes under his name, and even to this day is shewn to travellers, was dug in a rock. It is a little chamber, wrought with a chisel out of one piece of rock, which stands at some distance from the rest of the mountain, and is a square of eight paces from out to out. The inside of this chamber is all plain, but the outside is adorned with some pilasters of the same kind of stone. The upper part or covering is made in the form of a conic pyramid, pretty high and large, with a kind of flower-pot on its top. The pyramid is composed of several stones, but the monument itself is square, and all cut out of one block. In the time of Josephus, the monument, which was said to be Absalom's, was nothing more than one marble pillar, widely different from what at present goes under his name, and which therefore must be accounted a more modern building. *Le Clerc's* and *Patrick's* Commentaries, *Jewish Antiq.* lib. vii. cap. 9. and *Calmet's* Dictionary, under the word *Absalom*.

enough of his own), and the base murder of her gallant husband, for which no excuse, no colour of apology can be made, with what face could he reprove, much more chastise (as it deserved) the incestuous rape of his son Amnon upon the beauteous Tamar, or the barbarous and bloody revenge, which Absalom took upon this brother for violating his sister's honour?

From 2 Sam.
i. to xix.

Had David interposed but his paternal authority, and punished Amnon's crime with the severity it required, Absalom's resentment had perhaps never broke out into such violence as it did; but where do we read of any punishment, any disgrace, nay, even of any discountenance, put upon Amnon for his brutal and impious usage of his sister? All that the historian tells us of the matter is, that (a) "when King David heard of these things, he was very wroth:" But his wrath, it seems, he kept to himself; he shewed no tokens of it to the offender; and therefore Absalom, when he saw his father conniving at the thing, undertook to do himself justice, and to avenge the dishonour done to his family.

In this however he acted very wickedly: But then, why did not his father call him to an account for it? Why did he suffer him (b) to escape into Geshur, and not immediately send messengers to apprehend him? Instead of demanding him of the king of Geshur, in order to bring him to justice, the historian tells us, that (c) "the soul of king David longed to go forth unto Absalom;" and that, not long after, upon a very frivolous pretence, viz. the false and impertinent tale of a canting old woman, he took occasion to recal him; and, when he was recalled, suffered him to launch into greater extravagancies than ever prince had done before.

It is not much to be wondered at, that a young prince, of a proud ambitious spirit, with all this impunity and encouragement, should come at last to affect the government and depose his father; but certainly David appears to be a very weak man, when he gives his generals this charge concerning a rebel in arms against him; (d) "Deal gently, for my sake, with the young man, even with Absalom:" And Joab seems to be no very good subject, when, notwithstanding the king's command, (e) "he took three darts in his hand, and thrust them through the heart of Absalom." But in this he might the rather presume upon being pardoned by a man who had passed by his base and treacherous murder of Abner, without the least censure or rebuke.

To be a terror to evil-workers, even though they be our nearest friends and relations, and to be kind and merciful to such as behave gallantly, even though they be our greatest enemies, are no improper rules of conduct in any great prince: And yet how very reverse were David's actions to these, when we find him winking at murder at home, and pursuing, with the most exquisite tortures, such people as opposed his measures by fighting for their liberty abroad.

For what can we say for his putting the inhabitants of Rabbah, as well as the other cities of the Ammonites, (f) "under saws, and under harrows, and under axes, and making them pass through the brick-kiln?" What shall we say to his making war against Ishbosheth, Saul's son and heir, when himself (g) had sworn to the father, that he would "not cut off his seed," or destroy any of his family? What shall we say to his taking the advantage of Abner's resentment (h) to draw him aside from his master's service, and to enter into league (for the promotion of his own cause) with a very wicked man? And, lastly, what shall we say (i) to his obliging Hushai to use all manner of falsehood to Absalom; to act the hypocrite, and tell innumerable lies, on purpose to get into his confidence, and so betray his counsels? These, and several other instances that might be produced in this period of history, are enough to convince us, that, how

(a) 2 Sam. xiii. 21.

(b) Ver. 37.

(c) Ver. 39.

(d) Ibid. xviii. 5.

(e) Ver. 14.

(f) Ibid. xii. 31.

(g) 1 Sam. xxiv. 21, 22.

(h) 2 Sam. iii. 13.

(i) Ibid. xv. 34.

A. M. 2949, much soever David's piety and righteousness may be extolled by some, in his public capacity he was a weak prince, and in his private a bad ruler of his family; partial to his friends, cruel to his enemies, false to his promises, unjust in his distributions, and deceitful in his transactions with mankind; guilty of murder and adultery himself, and a tame conniver at those who committed the like offences.

But well may the historian leave these imputations upon David's character, when he is not afraid to load Almighty God with an accusation of captious cruelty. For what less can we call (a) his striking Uzzah dead upon the spot, merely for putting out his hand and laying hold on the ark, (which some would be apt to think proceeded from respect and reverence, more than any profanation of it), when, by the stumbling of the oxen, it was in danger of being overturned; and when he is not ashamed to relate such incongruous and incredible things, (b) "as the sound of mens marching upon the tops of mulberry-trees;" as (c) the extravagant story of a crown (worn by the king of Rabbah, and afterwards by David) which weighed an hundred and twenty-five pounds, more than any human neck could bear; and of (d) an head of hair belonging to Absalom, whose very clippings came to no less than four pounds and two ounces of our weight; with some other absurdities of the like nature?"

ANSWER. DAVID, no doubt, was a very fond father to his children, and a tender husband to his wives: Of these, it must be owned, he had too many, eighteen in number, if we will reckon his concubines into that relation, which in those days did not much differ from the other, except in some rites and solemnities of marriage. But as polygamy was then tolerated among the Jews, (e) and the prohibition of "a king's multiplying wives to himself" does no where limit the number of them, David might conceive that this polygamy was no transgression of the law, and thence he induced more readily to comply with it, in order to enlarge his family, and attach the principal nobility of his own nation, as well as some foreign potentates, more closely to his interest. (f) For it was always looked upon as a piece of political wisdom in princes to endeavour to have many children, that, by matching them into several powerful families, they might have more supporters of their authority, and more assistance in case of any invasion of it.

This however is no part of David's commendation, how much soever it might tend to his security: But that a father should be fond of a son, and in some instances carry that fondness to excess; that he should be blind to his lesser faults, and always inclinable, upon proper tokens of repentance, to forgive the greater; that he should love to see every thing look gay and handsome about him, be liberal to his decent expences, and ready to overlook some little extravagancies; that he should be uneasy in his absence, joyous to see him, and when he is in any imminent danger, very solicitous for his preservation, (which are all the articles brought against David in relation to his son Absalom): These are faults (if faults they be) which every good-natured parent, who feels the tender propensities of human nature towards those of his own flesh, will easily be induced to forgive: And well were it for David, if we could make the like apology for that great enormity of his in the matter of Uriah; but, * instead of attempting any extenuation of

(a) 2 Sam. vi. 7.

(b) Ibid. v. 24.

(c) Ibid. xii. 30.

(d) Ibid. xiv. 26.

(e) Deut. xvii. 17.

(f) *Patrick's Commentary* on 2 Sam. v. 13.

* But, contrary to this, the Jewish writers have endeavoured to justify David in this whole transaction; and, to this purpose, have invented laws and customs that are no where to be found, either in the books of Moses, or in the compass of their history. They pretend that David was married to Bathsheba

before her husband was dead, because it was a custom (as they say) for soldiers, whenever they went to the wars, to give their wives a bill of divorce, and consequently a full licence to marry whom they pleased. But it is in vain to attempt to excuse this black and crying sin in David, for which God so severely punished him, and for which he himself was always ready to acknowledge the Divine justice in so doing. *Calmet's Commentary* on 2 Sam. xi. 27.

it, we shall rather take notice of the several aggravations which moralists have discovered in it, and of the reasons for which the Spirit of God thought proper to record it in Holy Writ. From 2 Sam. i. to xix.

To this purpose, some have observed, 1st, That (*a*) “as David tarried at Jerusalem at the time when kings went forth to battle,” he there indulged himself in ease and luxury (which are the bane and rust of the mind), and so insensibly fell into those loose desires which drew him into such vile perpetrations; so that the first cause of his sin was idleness. 2d, They observe it as an aggravation of his crime, (*b*) that he certainly knew that Bathsheba was another man’s wife, and yet deliberately and advisedly committed the sin; nay, that she was the wife of one who was a proselyte to the Jewish religion, and therefore added scandal to his wickedness, or (as the text expresses it) (*c*) “gave great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme.” 3d, They observe that there was perfidy added to this guilt, and a sinful contrivance, (*d*) in causing Uriah to be sent for home; in receiving him with great tokens of his favour, and in entertaining him with good cheer, that he might be the more desirous to enjoy the company of his wife, and so have the child, which was got in adultery, reputed his own. 4th, They observe, (*e*) from Uriah’s answer, that had not David’s heart been seared, he could not but have felt a strong remorse upon thinking how he had abused so brave a man, and how he indulged himself in sinful pleasures, while this man, and the rest of his army, gloriously endured all manner of hardships for the service of their country. 5th, They observe, (*f*) from his design upon Uriah’s life, when he could not otherwise conceal his lewdness, how naturally one sin paves the way to another, and how, in a small compass of time, the fascination of sensual appetites is enough to change the very nature of mankind; since even he, who formerly spared Saul, unjustly seeking his life, is now put upon contriving the death of a very faithful servant, in a very base and unworthy manner. 6th, They observe it, as a further aggravation of his crime of murder, that he not only exposed an innocent and faithful servant to be killed, but that, together with him, (*g*) several more brave men, set in the front of the battle, where the service was hottest, must necessarily have fallen in the attack; so blind was he to the public good, and so prodigal of his subjects lives, if he might but cover his guilt, and gratify his lust. 7th, they observe, (*h*) from his answer to the messengers sent by Joab to acquaint him with Uriah’s death, viz. “the sword devoureth one as well as another,” the vile hypocrisy and obdurateness of his heart, imputing that to the chance of war, or rather to the direction of Divine Providence, which his conscience could not but tell him was of his own contrivance. 8th, and lastly, they observe, (*i*) from his marriage with Bathsheba, even before her husband was cold in his grave, how the eagerness of his indulged appetite had now extinguished (what in some sinners is last of all parted with, and for which he himself had lately embued his hands in blood) all sense of shame, and regard to reputation or decency.

These are some of the aggravations observable in David’s crime, which (besides his lust and cruelty) is loaded with too just an imputation of perfidy, of ingratitude, of hypocrisy, of deliberation, of obstinacy, and of shamelessness in sin: And for these purposes were they recorded in Scripture, that they might teach us the frailty of human nature, and how liable the best of men are, in some instances of their lives, to be overtaken with very gross faults: That they might shew us the natural gradation of one sin to another, and that, when once we have suffered our appetites to break loose from the restraints of duty, in a short time it will not be in our power to set bounds to them, however much we may wish to do so: That they might caution us against sloth and idleness, against indulging any inordinate passion, or gazing upon any objects that may endanger our

(*a*) 2 Sam. xi. 1.
(*f*) Ibid. xi. 15.

(*b*) Ibid.
(*g*) Ibid. ver. 15.

(*c*) Ibid. xii. 14.

(*d*) Ibid. xi. 6, &c.
(*h*) Ibid. ver. 25.

(*e*) Ibid. xi. 11.
(*i*) Ibid. ver. 27.

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innocence: That they might remind us all how much we stand in need continually of the Divine assistance, and therefore how much we are concerned to “pray with all prayer and supplication, and to watch, as well as pray, that we fall into no temptation:” And lastly, that they might inculcate that excellent precept which the apostle has laid down in these words—(a) “Brethren, if any man be overtaken in a fault, ye, that are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.”

One pernicious consequence of David’s transgression very likely was, that it made him timorous in inflicting punishments upon others; but the reason which Josephus assigns for his not chastising Amnon for his incestuous rape, viz. “because he was his eldest son, and he loved him, and would not displease him.” is a groundless calumny, and mere fiction; for (b) since the Sacred History has thought fit to be silent in this matter, no one can tell what his father either said or did to him. The true reason therefore, as we suppose, why his father did not proceed with severity against him, was, because the case (as it then stood) was intricate and perplexed, and such as the law had made no provision for. The law concerning rapes is worded thus:—(c) “If a damsel, that is a virgin, be betrothed unto a husband, and a man find her in the city, and lie with her; then ye shall bring them both out unto the gate of the city, and ye shall stone them with stones that they die: The damsel, because she cried not, being in the city; and the man, because he humbled his neighbour’s wife: And again, If a man find a damsel that is a virgin, which is not betrothed, and lay hold on her, and lie with her, and they be found; then the man that lay with her shall give unto the damsel’s father fifty shekels of silver, and she shall be his wife, because he hath humbled her; he may not put her away all his days.” These are the two principal laws concerning this matter, but neither come up to the case now before us: for, had David punished Amnon’s crime with death, as the former law requires, Tamar, in like manner, must have suffered too (even though she was innocent), because she cried not out; * and though she was not a betrothed damsel (as the case is put in the latter law), yet David could not compel Amnon to marry her, because such a marriage would have been incestuous; and therefore, we may suppose, that though David might reprimand his son very severely for having wrought folly in Israel, yet he could not bring him before a public judicature, because the law did not properly extend to his case; or if he had made it extend, the innocent must have suffered with the guilty; and (d) a rule of equity I think it is, rather to let the guilty escape, than that the innocent and injured should be destroyed.

The sacred historian has taken care to clear David from any base connivance at Absalom’s wickedness in murdering his brother Amnon, by telling us, that as soon as he had done it, (e) “he fled, and went to Talmi,” his grandfather by his mother’s side, who was then king of Geshur. Geshur was a city in Syria, which lay on the other side of Jordan; and Absalom, who meditated the murder of his brother, and could not but foresee that it would be an act of high displeasure to his father, invited the princes of the blood to his country-seat, which was (f) near the city Ephraim, not far from the river Jordan, that he might have a better opportunity, not only for putting in execution his wicked design, but of making his escape likewise: So that David (had he been ever so much minded) could not possibly have apprehended him, before he had got to a safe retreat; and where, it is easy to imagine, he would tell his tale so well as to gain his grandfather’s protection, if not the approbation of the fact, which, with a small share of eloquence, might be so set off, as to appear a necessary vindication of the honour of their family, which had been so grossly violated.

(a) Gal. vi. 1. (b) *Le Clerc’s Commentary* on 2 Sam. xiii. 21. (c) Deut. xxii. 23, &c.
* [It is not said that she cried not out, and the probability is that she did, though she was not heard.]
(d) *The History of the Life of King David.* (e) 2 Sam. xiii. 37. (f) *Ibid.* ver. 23.
Vide John xi. 54.

The law of God indeed is very express: (a) "Whosoever sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed; (b) neither shall ye take any satisfaction for the life of a murderer which is guilty of death, but he shall surely be put to death." Whereby it appears, that the supreme magistrate was obliged to execute justice upon all wilful murderers without any reservation; nor had David any power to dispense with God's laws, or to spare those whom he had commanded him to destroy. But then it must be considered, that the affront which Amnon put upon Absalom was very great and heinous; that Absalom, at this time, was out of the reach of David's justice, and so would have continued had he not obtained a promise of impunity; that, by living an exile in an heathenish country, David had reason to apprehend that his son was in danger of being infected with their wicked and idolatrous practices, and was therefore the rather inclined to recal him; and that the clamours and importunities of the people, which Joab procured this woman of Tekoah to represent to the king in a very free and artful manner, did almost compel him to do it; For what he said in the case of Joab's murder of Abner, viz. that he could not revenge it, because (c) "the sons of Zeruiah were too hard for him;" the like, very probably, might have been said in this case, where the people's hearts were so strongly, and so universally set upon Absalom; and that the rather, because his long banishment moved their pity, and his absence made them more impatient for his return. The eyes of all, in short, were upon him, as the next heir, as a wise, and gallant, and amiable prince, unhappy only in this instance of killing Amnon, for which he had a sufficient provocation; and therefore, to satisfy the cries of the people, as well as to provide for the security of his kingdom, which seemed to depend on the establishment of the succession in Absalom, David was obliged to forgive him, and recal him. And when he was recalled, and reinstated in the king's favour, it is no wonder that a young prince of his gay temper should multiply his attendants, and set up a rich equipage, to attract the eyes and admiration of mankind; or that his father, whose riches so well enabled him to bear the expence of this magnificence, and whose heart rejoiced perhaps to see his son the favourite of the people, did not restrain him in it; because a man of an open spirit himself loves to see his children make a figure in life, which, in all eastern countries, was a thing customary, and might here more especially be expected in the eldest, and heir presumptive to the crown.

(d) Some of the Jewish doctors tell us, that, how indulgent soever David might be to his son Absalom, he never intended him for his successor in the kingdom; that he had all along made a promise to Bathsheba, his favourite queen, (which promise, though (e) recorded later in history, might at first come to Absalom's ear) that her son Solomon should succeed in the regal dignity: and that Absalom, both from a consciousness of his own demerits, and of the superiority of wisdom and piety that appeared in Solomon, perceiving that his father intended to postpone him, and instate the other, entered into this rebellion, in order to assert his birth-right to the crown. But the fault in David was not any exclusion of right, but too blind an indulgence to his son, even while he was in arms against him, ready to kill, and resolved to depose him; "Spare ye the young man," says he; and this he might desire, partly from a consciousness of his own sin in the case of Uriah, which was the meritorious and procuring cause of the rebellion, in which his son was unhappily engaged; partly from a consideration of his youth, which is commonly foolish and giddy, and subject to evil counsels, and therefore deserves pity; and partly from a sense of piety in himself, as being unwilling that he should be cut off in a sinful rebellion, without any space or means of repentance.

These might be some of the reasons that made David give his army so strict a charge not to kill his son, in case they should take him: But Joab had quite different sentiments of the matter. He perceived that there could be no safety to the king, nor peace to the

From 2 Sam.
i. to xix.

(a) Gen. ix. 6. (b) Numb. xxxv. 31. (c) 2 Sam. iii. 39. (d) Pool's Annot. on 2 Sam. xv. 7.
(e) 1 Kings i. 30.

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kingdom, no security to himself, or other loyal subjects, as long as Absalom lived; that, notwithstanding this unnatural rebellion, the king was still inclinable to forgive him, and that there would always be some unquiet people that would be moving fresh disturbances, in order to set him on the throne. Looking upon this charge, therefore, as an order more proper for a parent than a prince, he adventured to disobey it. For he thought with himself, (a) that the king ought not to be observed in an affair wherein he shewed more regard to his private passion than to the public good; that fathers should always sacrifice their paternal tenderness to the interest of the government; and that as Absalom had forfeited his life to the laws upon several accounts, it was but justice now to take this opportunity of dispatching him, as an enemy to his king and country: But whether, in this act of disobedience to the royal command, Joab is perfectly to be vindicated, we shall not pretend to determine. It is certain that he was a person of a bold temper, high passions, and fiery resentments; that valued himself upon the services he had done the king, and seemed not to be much afraid of his authority.

The complaint which David makes to some of his courtiers, upon this general's murdering the famous Abner, declares the true reason why he could not, at that time, put the laws in execution against him: (b) "Know ye not, says he, that there is a prince, and a great man fallen this day in Israel? And I am this day weak, though anointed king; and these men, the sons of Zeruiah, be too hard for me: The Lord shall reward the doer of evil according to his wickedness." Joab was David's sister's son, or nephew, (c) who had stuck close to him in all his adversity, an excellent soldier himself, and a man of great power and authority among the army; so that, had David immediately called him to justice for this vile act against Abner, such was his interest among the soldiery, that he soon would have caused a mutiny or revolt, and found a means to shock or unhinge the government, that was not as yet sufficiently established. It was a point of prudence therefore in David, to delay the punishment of so powerful, and so perilous a man, until a more convenient season, and only, for the present, to express his detestation of the deed, by commending the deceased, condemning the murder, and commanding the murderer (by way of penance) to attend the funeral in sackcloth and other ensigns of mourning.

So far is David from winking at Abner's murder, that we find him burying him with great solemnity, and making mournful lamentation over his grave; praising his valour, and other great qualities publicly, and cursing the author of his untimely death: (d) "I and my kingdom, says he, are guiltless before the Lord for ever from the blood of Abner, the son of Ner: Let it rest on the head of Joab, and on all his father's house, and let there not fail from the house of Joab one that hath an issue, or that is a leper, or that leaneth on a staff, or that falleth on the sword, or that lacketh bread."

But what apology shall we make for his treating the Ammonites so inhumanly, and putting them to such exquisite torments, only for a small indignity which a young king, at the instigation of some evil counsellors, put upon his ambassadors, since there seems to be no proportion between the affront and the revenge, between the one's having their beards and clothes cut a little shorter, and the other's being put under saws and harrows, or thrown into hot burning furnaces? Had David, indeed, been the inventor of such frightful punishments, we might have justly reckoned him a man of the same cruel and brutal spirit as was Caligula, who in after ages (as (e) Suetonius tells us) was wont to take a great delight in inflicting them: But the truth is, that these were the punishments which the Ammonites inflicted upon the Jews whenever they took them prisoners; and therefore David, when he conquered their country, and reduced their capital city, used them with the like cruelty: not every one of them indiscriminately, but such

(a) Calmet's Commentary, on 2 Sam. xviii. 14.
Commentary on 2 Sam. iii. 39.

(d) 2 Sam. iii. 28, 29.

(b) 2 Sam. iii. 38.

(e) Cap. xxvii.

(c) Patrick's

only as appeared in arms against him, and had either advised or approved the advice of putting such a disgrace upon his messengers. From 2 Sam. i. to xix.

The Ammonites, it is certain, were early initiated into all the cruelties of the people of Canaan. When they infested Jabesh-Gilead, and the besieged made an offer to surrender, the easiest condition that they would grant them was, that they might (a) "thrust out all their right eyes, and lay it for a reproach upon Israel for ever;" which one instance, as I take it, is in the room of ten thousand proofs to demonstrate, that these Ammonites were monsters of barbarity; and that therefore king David was no more culpable for retaliating upon them the same cruelties that they used to inflict on others, than the people of Agrigentum were, for burning Phalaris in his own bull, or Theseus the hero, for stretching Procrustes beyond the dimensions of his own bed. For even Heathen casuists have determined, that no law can be more just and equitable, than that which decreed artists of cruelty to perish by their own arts.

The particular punishment of passing through the brick-kilns, an ingenious (b) author seems fairly to account for, by making this conjecture. "It is very well known, says he, that the Jews were slaves in Egypt, and particularly employed in brick-making. Now it is natural for all people at enmity, to reproach one another with the meanness and baseness of their original. As therefore the Ammonites were a cruel and insolent enemy, and nothing could be more natural for men of their temper, when they had got any Jews in their power, than to cry out, 'Send the slaves to the brick-kilns, and so torture them to death;' so nothing could be more natural than for the Jews, when they got an advantage over them, to return them the same treatment." However this be, it is certain, that the siege of Rabbah began before David had any criminal commerce with Bathsheba, and if the town was not taken till after Solomon's birth (as the sequel of his history seems to imply), the siege must last for about two years; in which time, upon the supposition that David continued in an obdurate state of sin and impenitence*, and was therefore deprived of that mild and merciful spirit for which he had formerly been so remarkable; there is no wonder if, being now become cruel and hard-hearted, as well as exasperated with the length of the siege, he treated the Ammonites in the same outrageous manner that they were accustomed to treat his subjects, not only to retaliate the thing upon them, but to deter all future ages likewise from violating the right of nations, by treating the persons of public ambassadors with contempt.

That the rights of ambassadors are guarded by all laws, both Divine and human, and that therefore a violation of these rights is not only unjust, but impious, is the general sentiment of all the most able (c) writers upon the laws and constitutions of civil government. So tender were the Romans in this particular, (d) that they appointed twenty *feciales* (as they called those officers) to inspect their good usage, and preserve their immunities; to make them immediate reparation, when any injury was done them; and, in case of a personal affront or indignity, to deliver up the offender, even though he were a noble or a patrician by birth, into the hands of the nation from whence the ambassador came, to be treated by them as they thought fit. And therefore, we need less wonder that king David, who in all his actions was a nice observer of every punctilio in public honour, should resent, in so high a manner, an indignity, the greatest that could be offered, put upon his ministers, and from them reflecting upon his own majesty, merely for sending a kind compliment of condolence to a foolish prince (as he proved), upon the death of a very worthy father.

A man so zealous for his own honour, as well as for the right of nations, in his pub-

(a) 1 Sam. xi. 2. (b) *The History of the Life of King David.* * [This supposition cannot be admitted. Nathan had made David sensible of his sin, and truly penitent even before Bathsheba bare Solomon's elder brother.] (c) Vide *Grotius, Selden, Puffendorf, &c.* (d) *Grotius, de Jure Belli, lib. ii. cap. 18.*

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lic capacity, can hardly be presumed to be an abettor of perfidy in his more private. We must therefore suppose, that, notwithstanding his war with Ishbosheth, wherein there might happen some skirmishes, he still kept his promise with his father Saul, "not to destroy any of his family;" and therefore, in the whole compass of the war (in which, though it lasted seven years, we nowhere read of one battle fought), he acted in the defensive, not offensive part, and kept an army by him, not to destroy Saul's posterity, but merely to maintain himself in the possession of that regal dignity, wherewith Samuel, by God's order and appointment, had invested him.

Ishbosheth knew very well that Samuel had anointed David, and that God had appointed him to be his father's successor in the whole kingdom of Israel. And therefore his opposing him in an hostile manner, was provocation enough, one would think, had not David remembered (a) his oath made to Saul, and thereupon overlooked this ill treatment of his son, and pronounced him a (b) righteous person. The removal of an adversary, and dangerous competitor for a crown, might be thought a meritorious piece of service by some ambitious princes; but David was of another sentiment. His soul and his notions were the same as what inspired the great Alexander, when he took vengeance on Bessus for having killed his enemy Darius; (c) for he did not consider Darius so much in the capacity of an enemy, as Bessus in that of a friend, to the person whom he had basely murdered. And it is not improbable, that his reflection upon the sad fate of Saul's unhappy family, and the solemn promise he had given for their preservation, as well as the design (d) of clearing himself from the least suspicion of having any hand in this barbarous regicide, prevailed with David to inflict upon the authors of it, the exemplary punishment of hanging them upon gibbets, to be a spectacle of abhorrence; of "cutting off their right hands," (e) wherewith they had committed this execrable deed, and of "cutting off their feet," wherewith they had made their escape from justice.

Abner indeed acted very basely, very treacherously, in deserting Ishbosheth (the king whom he had set up) upon a very slight provocation; but David had no concern in all this. The kingdom belonged to him by Divine donation. Abner knew this before he proclaimed Ishbosheth; and therefore all the mischiefs of the civil war are chargeable upon him: nor can David be blamed for receiving his own right, even though it was tendered to him by the hand of a bad man. The truth is,—David did not delude Abner from his master, but Abner made the first overture of his service to him; and as this was no unfavourable opportunity of uniting the two contending kingdoms which Providence seemed to have thrown in his way, David had been perfidious, not only to his own interest, but to the establishment of the general peace of the nation, had he not fallen in with it. (f) He, no doubt, was privy to the cause of Abner's disgust; but without approving either of his crime or his treason, he might lawfully make use of the traitor; nay, and confer on him some tokens of his favour too, in consideration of the benefits he had received from him, and of some commendable qualities, either natural or political, that he had observed in him. The instrument is not to be regarded in all actions, and even a bad man, when he does good services, may merit a reward, and be received with some approbation.

No man indeed should engage another in a base or wicked action; (g) because, whether he commits the thing itself, or employs another to do it, the crime is the same; but it is not so (says (h) Grotius) if a person freely offers himself without any solicitation or persuasion to it. In this case it is not unlawful to use him as an instrument,

(a) 1 Sam. xxiv. 21. (b) 2 Sam. iv. 11. (c) Interea unus ex Darii amicis Bessus, vinctus producitur, qui regem non solum prodiderat, verum et interfecerat. Quem in ultionem perfidiæ ex-cruciandum fratri Darii tradidit; reputans non tam hostem suum fuisse Darium, quam amicum ejus, à quo esset occisus. Justin, lib. xii. c. 5. (d) Le Clerc's Comment. (e) Patrick's Commentary. (f) Calmet's Commentary on 2 Sam. iii. 12. (g) Nihil interest, utrum ipse scelus admittas, an alium propter te admittere velis. August. in Moribus Manichæ. (h) De Jure Belli, lib. iii. cap. 1. Transugam jure Belli recipimus. Grotius,

in order to execute what is confessedly lawful for us to do: and as it is not contrary to the laws of arms to receive a deserter who quits the enemy's party and embraces ours; so we cannot perceive how David could become culpable in taking the advantage of Abner's quarrel with Ishbosheth, when, without any application of his, he voluntarily sent to him and offered him his service; and when the good Providence of God seems to have employed the passion and angry resentment of that haughty general, in order to bring about his wise designs, and by the union of the two kingdoms prevent the effusion of much blood.

But what shall we say in excuse for his perfidy, when we find him putting his friend Hushai upon acting such a part as but badly became a man of honour, upon going and offering his service to his son Absalom, on purpose to betray him or give him bad counsel? The words of David are these:—(a) “If thou return to the city, and say unto Absalom, I will be thy servant, O king; as I have been thy father's servant hitherto, so will I now also be thy servant; then mayest thou for me defeat the counsels of Ahithophel.” But David, by these words, (say some interpreters) did not advise Hushai to betray Absalom, or, for his sake, to violate the laws of friendship, but purely to go and adjoin himself to Absalom, (who by this time had assumed the title of king, and could not properly be addressed without calling him so) in order to destroy the counsels of Ahithophel, just as a general sends his spies into the enemy's camp, to know what passes there; or as a king keeps in foreign courts his envoys to gain intelligence of the designs that may be formed against him, and to defeat the resolutions that may be taken to his prejudice. But (whether these comparisons may come up to the case before us or no) it was certain, at this juncture, Absalom's business was to be upon his guard. The unjust war which he had declared against his father, gave his father a right to treat him as an open enemy, and to employ either force or artifice against him; nor can this conduct of his be blamed, unless we should say—that when kings are engaged in war, they are forbidden to disguise their true designs, even though it be a thing notorious, that upon this disguise the practice of stratagems in war (which were never yet accounted unlawful) is entirely founded.

The truth is, (b) Absalom, as a traitor, a murderer, a rebel, and, as far as in him lay, a parricide, had forfeited all the rights of society, but more especially as a rebel; for a rebel, who sets himself to overturn the established government, order, and peace of any community, does by that hostile attempt actually divest himself of all social rights in that community. And consequently David could be no more guilty of perfidy in forming a design to supplant Absalom, nor Hushai guilty of villany, in undertaking to put it in execution, than that man can be said to be guilty of sin who deceives a madman, and turns him away from murdering his best friends.

The short of the matter is—Hushai's instructions were to negotiate David's interest among the rebels as well as he could. This he could not do without seeming to act in a contrary character; and in order to effect this, there was a necessity for his concealing himself; and conceal himself he could not without some degree of dissimulation; and therefore the end which he proposed in what he did, viz. the prevention of that long train of mischiefs which always attends a civil war, was sufficient to justify the means which he took to accomplish it. For though it is to be wished with (c) Cicero, that “all lying and dissimulation were utterly banished from human life;” yet, as others have maintained, that a “beneficial falsehood is better than a destructive truth,” a case may be so circumstantiated as to make dissimulation, which (as (d) Lord Bacon says) “is nothing else but a necessary dependant upon silence, highly necessary; and a lie, which otherwise would be blameable in a slave, will deserve commendation (says

(a) 2 Sam. xv. 34.
(d) *Serm. Fidel.* lib. vi.

(b) *The History of the Life of King David*, vol. iii.

(c) *Offic. lib.* iii. c. 15.

A. M. 2919,
&c. or 4311.
Ant. Chris.
1035, &c. or
1070.

(a) Quintilian) when a wise man makes use of it, to save his country by deceiving his enemy." Now, as Hushai's whole design was to deceive an open and declared enemy, who can doubt but that he was at full liberty, by his address and subtilty, to disconcert the measures of those, whom all agree that, had he been so minded, he had licence to attack with open violence? (b) To overcome an enemy indeed by valour rather than art, sounds more gallant, and by some has been thought a more † reputable way of conquest; but, since the laws of nature and arms have made no difference, and those of humanity and mercy seem to incline to that side wherein there is likely to be the least blood-shed, Hushai may be said to have acted the worthy patriot, as well as the faithful subject, in breaking the force of an unnatural rebellion, and in putting it into his royal master's mouth to say, (c) "the Lord is known to execute judgment; the ungodly are trapped in the work of their own hands. They are sunk down in the pit that they made; in the same net which they hid privily are their feet taken."

Thus, though we are not obliged to vindicate David in every passage of his life, and think some of the crying sins he was guilty of utterly inexcusable; yet (if we except these) we cannot but think, that although he was a very tender and indulgent parent, yet he was no encourager of vice in his own family, or a tame conniver at it in others, had he not been restrained, by reasons of state, sometimes from punishing it; that he was true to his promises, just in his distributions, and prudent, though not crafty, in his military transactions; "of a singular presence of mind, (as (d) Josephus speaks of him) to make the best of what was before him; and of as sharp a foresight for improving all advantages, and obviating all difficulties that were like to happen;" tender to all persons in distress, kind to his friends, forgiving to his enemies; and, when at any time he was forced to use severity, it was only in retaliation of what other people had done to him.

Happy were it for us, * if we could account for the operations of God with the same facility that we can for the actions of his saints; but his counsels are a great deep, and his judgments (just though they be) are sometimes obscure, and past finding out. For what shall we say to the fate of Uzzah? or what tolerable cause can we assign for his sudden and untimely end? It was now near seventy years since the Israelites carried the ark from place to place, and so long a disuse had made them forget the manner of doing it. In conformity to what they had heard of the Philistines, they put it into a new cart, or waggon; but this was against the express direction of the law, (e) which ordered it to be borne upon mens shoulders. It is commonly supposed, that Uzzah was a Levite, though there is no proof of it in Scripture; but supposing he was, he had no right to attend upon the ark; that province, by the same law, (f) was restrained to those Levites only who were of the house of Kohath: Nay, put the case he had been a Kohathite by birth, yet he had violated another command, which prohibited even these Levites, (though they carried it by staves upon their shoulders) (g) upon pain of death to touch it with their hands: so that here was a three-fold transgression of the Divine will in this method of proceeding. The ark, (as some say) by Uzzah's

(a) *Quintil. Instit. Orat. lib. xii. c. 1.*

(b) *Puffendorf's Law of Nature, lib. iv. c. 1. and Grotius's Rights of Peace, lib. iii. c. 1.*

† Thus when Persius, the Macedonian king, was deceived by the hopes of peace, the old senators disallowed the act as inconsistent with Roman bravery; saying,—That their ancestors prosecuted their wars by valour, not craft, not like the subtle Carthaginians, or cunning Grecians, among whom it was a greater glory to overcome their enemies by treachery than true valour. *Livy, lib. xlii. c. 47.* And it was a known principle of Alexander's, that he scorned to steal a

victory. *Plutarch de Alex. and Q. Curtius, lib. ix. c. 13.*

(c) *Psal. ix. 15, 16.*

(d) *Jewish Antiquities, lib. vii. c. 12.*

* [I cannot say that I perceive how such knowledge could add to our happiness. It would in a great measure destroy the possibility of *faith* or implicit trust in God's goodness, wisdom and power; and such trust would be ill exchanged for any knowledge that could be bestowed on creatures so imperfect as the inhabitants of this earth must be.]

(e) *Numb. vii. 9.* (f) *Ibid.* (g) *Ibid. iv 15.*

direction, was placed in a cart; Uzzah, without any proper designation, adventures to attend it; when he thought it in danger of falling, officiously he put forth his hand, and laid hold on it, (all violations of the Divine commands) and this (as is supposed) not so much out of reverence to the sacred symbol of God's presence, as out of diffidence of his providence, as unable to preserve it from overturning.

From 2 Sam.
i. to xix.

The truth is, this ark had so long continued in obscurity, that the people in a manner had lost all sense of a Divine power residing in it, and therefore approached it with irreverence. This is implied in David's exhortation to Zadok and Abiathar, after this misfortune upon Uzzah: (a) "Ye are the chief of the fathers of the Levites; sanctify yourselves therefore, both ye and your brethren, that you may bring up the ark of the Lord God of Israel unto the place that I have prepared for it; for because ye did it not at the first, the Lord our God made a breach upon us, for that we sought him not after the due order." What wonder then, if God, being minded to testify his immediate presence with the ark, to retrieve the ancient honour of that sacred vessel, and to curb all licentious profanations of it for the future, should single out one that was the most culpable of many, one who in three instances was then violating his commands, to be a monument of his displeasure against either a wilful ignorance, or a rude contempt of his precepts, be they even so seemingly small; that by such an example of terror, he might inspire both priests and people with a sacred dread of his majesty, and a profound veneration for his mysteries?

God indeed is left to his own pleasure, what signs he shall think fit to give to his people upon any occasion for their good; but the more arbitrary and uncommon any sign is, the more it seems to have proceeded from God. Though, therefore, the sound of peoples going upon the tops of trees be a thing not so congruous to our conceptions, yet it will not therefore follow, that it was not the real sign which God gave David, because the stranger the phenomenon was, the greater assurance it conveyed of the Divine interposition in his favour: Nor can the practicableness of the thing be disputed, since it was confessedly an host of angels (who could move on the tops of trees as well as plain ground) that made this noise of an army's marching.

There is no reason however to acquiesce in this construction only. (b) The word *beroché*, which we render *tops*, in several places of Scripture signifies the *beginnings* of things likewise; and in this acceptance, the sense of the sign which God gave David will be this:—"When thou hearest a sound, as it were, of many men marching at the entrance of the place, where the mulberry trees are planted, then do thou make ready to fall upon thine enemy; for this noise (which is occasioned by the ministry of my angels) goes before thee, both to conduct thee in thy way, and to inject terror into thine adversaries."

But how plausible soever this interpretation may seem, there is some reason to suspect, that the other word *bochim*, which our translation calls *mulberry trees*, is in reality the proper name of a place. (c) The prophet Isaiah has a plain allusion to this piece of history, and seems to confirm what we here suggest. "The Lord, says he, shall rise up as in Mount Perazim; he shall be wroth as in the valley of Gibeon;" i. e. he shall destroy his enemies, as he did the Philistines at Baal Perazim, under David, and the Canaanites at Gibeon, under Joshua: What hinders then but that *Beroche Bochim* may signify the mountains of *Bochim*? And so the sense of the words will be,—“When thou hearest a noise, as of many people marching upon the hills, or high places of *Bochim*, then thou has nothing to do but to fall immediately upon the enemy.” Either of these interpretations clears the text from any seeming absurdity; and I shall only observe farther, that from the passage of the above cited prophet, as well as some ex-

(a) 1 Chron. xv. 12, 13.

(b) Patrick's Commentary in locum.

(c) Isa. xxviii. 21.

A. M. 2949.
&c. or 4341.
Ant. Chris.
1055, &c.
or 1070.

pressions in the 18th Psal. such as, (d) "He sent out his arrows, and scattered them; he cast forth lightnings, and destroyed them," it seems very likely that a mighty storm of thunder and lightning, of hailstones, and coals of fire, (as the Psalmist calls it), was assistant to David in the acquisition of this victory.

In the account of David's conquest of the Ammonites, the weight of their king's crown seems not a little monstrous. The weight of a talent, which, upon the lowest computation, amounts to no less than 123 pounds, is allowed to be too much for one neck to sustain; but then we should consider, that besides the crown that was usually worn, it was customary, in some nations, for kings to have * vast large ones (even to a size equal to this), either hung, or supported, over the throne, where at their coronation, or upon other solemn occasions, they were wont to sit.

The Jewish doctors indeed have a very odd conceit, viz. that David, when he took this crown from the king of Ammon, hung it up on high by a certain loadstone that he had; as if the power of the magnet were to attract gold as well as iron. But let that be as it will, it is but to suppose, that the crown, here under debate was of this larger kind, and that, by some means or other, it was supported over the king's head while he was sitting on his throne, and then there will be an apparent reason for taking the crown from off, or (as the Hebrew words will bear it) "from over the king's head," and placing it, in like manner, over David's head, even to indicate the translation of his kingdom to David.

(b) It is a common thing, however, in Hebrew, as well as other learned languages, to have the same word signify both the weight and value of any thing. And that the price or worth of the crown is here the meaning of the phrase, we have the more reason to think, because mention is made of an addition of precious stones, which are never estimated by the weight of gold. (c) Josephus tells us of one stone of great value in the middle of the crown, which he calls a sardonix; and as we may suppose that there were other jewels of several kinds placed at their proper distances, these, in proportion as they heightened the value, must lessen the weight of the crown, and verify what the same historian tells us of it, viz. "that David wore it constantly on his head afterwards for an ornament."

There is another difficulty still behind, which relates to the weight of Absalom's hair, that in the words of the text is thus expressed:—(d) "And when he polled his head, (for it was at every year's end that he polled it, and because the hair was heavy on him, therefore he polled it), he weighed the hair of his head at two hundred shekels after the king's weight." In the explication of which words, the sentiments of the learned have been so many and various, that we shall content ourselves with commenting upon some of the chief of them.

Those who are of opinion that the words related only to the cuttings of Absalom's hair, make the two hundred shekels the price and not the weight of them: And to this purpose they suppose, that though Absalom himself might not sell his hair, yet some persons about him might do it, in complaisance to the ladies of Jerusalem, who might

(a) Psal. xviii. 14.

* The ancients make mention of several such large crowns as these, which were made for sight more than any thing else. Juvenal, exposing the pride and vanity of some of the chief magistrates at Rome, describes the pomp and splendour of their appearance in these words:

Quid si vidisset prætorem in curribus altis
Extantem, et medio sublimem in pulvere circi,
In tunica Jovis, et pictæ sarrana ferentem
Ex humeris aulæa togæ, magnæque coronæ.

Tantum orbem, quanto cervix non sufficit ulla?

Sat. 10.

Athenæus (lib. v. c. 8.) describes a crown made of gold, that was four and twenty feet in circumference, and mentions others that were two, some four, and some five feet deep; as Pliny, (lib. xxxiii. c. 3.) in like manner, takes notice of some that were of no less than eight pounds weight. *Calmet's Comment. in locum.*

(b) *Pool's Annotations and Patrick's Commentary in locum.*

(c) *Jewish Antiq.* lib. 7. c. 7. (d) 2 Sam. xiv. 26.

not think themselves in the fashion unless they wore a favourite lock of the prince's. But besides the absurdity of the king's son suffering any of his domestics to sell his hair, the very words of the text are a confutation of this notion, where they tell us, that "he weighed the hair of his head;" whereas, had it been sold, the buyer must have weighed the money, even (a) as Abraham did when he purchased the field of Ephron.

From 2 Sam.
i. to xix.

Others again pretend, that there is a manifest mistake crept into the text, which has been occasioned by an ignorant transcriber's inserting one numerical letter for another, the *resch* instead of the *daleth*, i. e. two hundred instead of four: But, besides the uncertainty, whether the former Hebrews made use of their letters instead of figures, (whereof there is not the least sign or token in any ancient copies), wherein, I pray, would the great wonder be, if what was cut off from Absalom's head (to thin and shorten his hair when it grew too weighty and troublesome to him) amounted to no more than four shekels, which is much about two ounces? And yet the whole design of this narration seems to portend something more than usual in this prodigious increase of Absalom's hair.

The text however does not speak of the cuttings of the hair, but of the head of hair itself, when it talks of the weight of two hundred shekels; and therefore those who take it in this larger sense are not forgetful to remind us, that in those days hair was accounted a very great ornament, and the longer it was the more it was esteemed; that Absalom, to be sure, would not fail to nourish his with the utmost care, and to let it grow long enough, because it contributed so much to the gracefulness of his person; that in after-ages (as perhaps they did then) men were wont to use much art with their hair, and dress it every day with fragrant ointments, in order to make it grow thick and strong; that the noble guards which attended Solomon (as Josephus (b) informs us) had their long hair flowing about their shoulders, which they powdered with small particles of gold, to make it sparkle and glisten against the sun; and that, therefore, it is not improbable that Absalom, who himself was a gay young man, and wanted none of these helps or improvements, might, in process of time, bring his hair up to the weight that the Scripture records, which, according to the gold shekel (that was but half as much as the silver) came to no more (as the learned Bochart endeavours to prove) than three pounds and two ounces.

But since the Scripture says nothing of any such additions as ointments or gold dust, to enhance the weight of the hair, others, who think this too much for a man that polled his hair once every year, if not oftener, have observed, from the words which we render at "every year's end," that, in the original, they imply no particular designation of time; and thence infer, that Absalom did not weigh his hair so often as once every year, but at this particular time only when he returned to Jerusalem. "He, in his exile, say they, which lasted about three years, pretending great sorrow for his sin, seems to have taken upon him the vow of a Nazarite until his return; one part of which was, that he should not suffer his hair to be cut for such a determinate time. But upon his recal home, being now discharged from his vow, he ordered his hair to be cut all clean off, because it was grown very cumbersome to him; which, being of so long a growth, amounted to the weight that the Sacred History relates of it." But this notion of Absalom's Nazaritism has no foundation in Scripture, (c) except that lying pretence to his father, when, under the cloak of religion, he was minded to conceal his intended rebellion; and therefore all the superstructure built upon it must necessarily fall.

Others, perceiving that none of these inventions would answer the purpose, have endeavoured to solve the difficulty, by attending to the latter words in the text, "two hundred shekels after the king's weight. And to this purpose, (d) they lay it down as

(a) Gen. xxiii. 16.

(b) *Jewish Antiq.* lib. viii. c. 12.

(c) 2 Sam. xv. 7, &c.

(d) Vide *Calmet's Commentary* in locum.

A. M. 2949, a principle, that, during the reigns of the kings of Judah, there was no variation in the Hebrew weights, nor were there any that were called the king's; that the difference between the king's and the common weight, did not commence till after some continuance of the Babylonish captivity; that, towards the end of this captivity, whoever he was that revised these books of Samuel, made mention of such weights as were not properly Hebrew, but such as (after sixty or seventy years captivity) the Jews only knew, and these were the Babylonish; and that therefore, when he comes to mention the weight of Absalom's hair, and tells us, that it was two hundred shekels, he adds, (by way of explanation) that it was after the king's weight, i. e. after the weight of the king of Babylon, whose shekel was but the third part of an Hebrew shekel, (a) as the best writers upon weights and measures are generally agreed. So that, according to this hypothesis, Absalom's hair, which weighed two hundred Babylonish shekels, came but, in our weight, to about thirty-three ounces; a quantity, which those who deal in that commodity have not unfrequently met with upon several womens heads, and therefore what brings this long-contested story, at least, within the bounds of a fair probability.

Thus have we attempted to solve most of the remarkable difficulties that either affect the character of David, or other parts of Scripture account, during this period of its history: And may now begin to wave the testimony of Heathen authors, in confirmation of what we may think strange and unaccountable in the Sacred Records, because facts of that kind will not so frequently occur; and the Jewish nation begins now, in the reign of king David, to make so considerable a figure, as to have their affairs either mentioned, or alluded to, by the most remarkable historians both Greek and Latin.

DISSERTATION IV.

OF THE SACRED CHRONOLOGY, AND PROFANE HISTORY, DURING THIS PERIOD.

BEFORE we enter upon the foreign history of this period, it may not be improper to take notice of some chronological difficulties that are to be found in the Scripture account of it. The space of time, from the departure of the children of Israel out of Egypt, to the laying of the foundation of the temple at Jerusalem, is so exactly stated, that it will admit of no dispute; "for (b) it came to pass," says the text, "in the four hundred and fourscore year, after the children of Israel were come up out of the land of Egypt, in the month Zif, which is the second month, that Solomon began to build the house of the Lord:" but then the manner of computing this number of years has been various.

(c) The generality of the Jews, who make it 450 years from the death of Joshua to the time of Samuel, suppose the difference, from the departure out of Egypt to the first beginning of the temple, to be 597 years; but this account is 117 more than what we find in Scripture. (d) Josephus expressly tells us,—that "when Solomon begun that mighty work, it was 592 years from the coming of the Israelites out of Egypt;" but then it is presumed, that he (as well as the other Jews) reckons the years of the oppres-

(a) Vid. *Calmet's Commentary* in locum.
Chronology, lib. v. c. 1.

(b) 1 Kings vi. 1.
(d) *Jewish Antiq.* b. viii. c. 2.

(c) *Bedford's Scripture*

sors apart; whereas they ought to be included in the years of the judges who delivered the people from that bondage; for it is but looking into the Scripture account, and we shall see that, (a) before Othniel, Israel was oppressed eight years; before Ehud, eighteen; before Deborah, twenty; before Gideon, seven; before Jephthah, eighteen; and before Samson, forty; now, adding all these together, we shall find that they amounted to 111 years; which, if joined to the years of the judges, will make the particular years of this period far exceed the general; but by being included in the time assigned for the government of the judges, they make that particular and general account of the years agree very rightly*.

From 2 Sam.
i. to xix.

There is another difference between this account in the first book of Kings, and what the apostle affirms in the Acts of the Apostles, viz. that (b) "after the time that Joshua divided the land to them by lot, God gave them judges for about the space of four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet." But now, if there be 450 years from the division of the land of Canaan (which happened in the seventh year of Joshua's government) to the time of the government, or even of the death of Samuel, there must be many more than 480 years, in the whole interval, from the departure out of Egypt to the building of the temple.

To solve this difficulty some have imagined, that the words *μετὰ ταῦτα*, *after that*, which are found in the twentieth verse, should be placed at the beginning of the seventeenth, and then the sense will be, that, "from God's choosing our fathers, to the time of the judges, were four hundred and fifty years;" for, from Isaac's birth, say they, to the departure of Israel out of Egypt, are 405 years; they wandered in the wilderness forty years; and the land was divided by lot seven years after that; so that all these put together make 452 years, which the apostle expresses by the round sum of 450. But this apparently is not the sense of the apostle, who, in his discourse to the people, goes on gradually and methodically thus: "God chose our fathers; he brought them out of Egypt; he led them in the wilderness forty years; he divided the land; and then he gave them judges," &c. (c) Others therefore have fallen into a different way of computation, by making the years of the judges and oppressors distinct; for the years of the judges, say they, until Samuel's time, are 339; the years of the tyrants are 111; which put together make exactly 450: And this kind of reckoning the apostle might mention (though he did not entirely approve of it); and therefore we find him introducing it with an *ὥς*, i. e. *after a manner*, or, *as some will have it*, who compute the years of the oppressors as distinct from the years of the judges, though in reality they ought to be included in one another.

There is still a farther difficulty which arises from comparing the Scripture chronology with the genealogies in the book of Ruth. From the entrance into the land of Canaan to the building of the temple were 440 years: Now, if out of this we subtract for David's life seventy years, and for that part of Solomon's reign which was before the foundation of the temple four years, the remainder will be 366; and yet for these three hundred and sixty-six years we have four generations only, (for Salmon begat Boaz of Rahab; Boaz begat Obed of Ruth; Obed begat Jesse; and Jesse begat David), which, at a time (d) when the age of man was reduced to the compass of seventy or eighty years, is a thing almost impossible. But as it is not certain that the lives of all men were shortened at the time when the Israelites murmured in the wilderness, forasmuch as the reason for cutting them off so soon (even to prevent their entering into the land of promise) was peculiar to that generation, and might not affect others; so the lives of others might be extended much longer, until the days of David, and es-

(a) Millar's History of the Church, c. i. p. 4.

* [But what evidence is there that they should be so included? Josephus had not included them; and he surely understood the historical part of the Bible

better than any modern can be supposed to do.]

(b) Act. xiii. 20.

(c) Vide Grotius and Usher.

(d) Psal. xc. 10.

A. M. 2949,
&c. or 4341.
Ant. Chris.
1055, &c.
or 1070.

pecially in that family which God had honoured so highly, as to appoint that in it his blessed Son should be born.

(a) According to this account, we may suppose that Salmon might be about twenty years old when he entered into Canaan, and Rahab, whom he married, to be about the same age; and that Rahab might bear Boaz in the sixty-second year of her age, which in those days was no extraordinary thing: And then it is but supposing farther, that Boaz was an hundred and two years old before he begat Obed; Obed an hundred and eleven before he begat Jesse; and Jesse of the same age before he begat David; and the whole difficulty is removed: Only it may be thought a little strange that men, above an hundred years old, should be capable of begetting children, until it be considered that Moses, and Aaron, and Joshua, and Caleb, were all vigorous men at this age; that, long after this, Jehoiada the high priest was an hundred and thirty years old when he died; and that, almost in our own remembrance, our countryman, Thomas Parr, lived to an hundred and fifty-two, and had a son when he was an hundred and five years old.

[All these difficulties, however, seem to be completely removed in a different way by Dr Hales in his Analysis of Ancient Chronology. Of the principles on which that laborious and useful work is constructed, a very short account has been already given (b); from which it appears that the whole period which intervened between the exode and the building of Solomon's temple, amounted to 621 years. For shortening the length of this period, the Jews had the very same motive as for curtailing the periods between the creation and the deluge, and between the deluge and the call of Abraham: it was indeed part of the same scheme for raising prejudices in the minds of their countrymen against the Messiahship of Jesus of Nazareth. The learned author having given, from one of their rabbins—David Ganz—a table in which they contrive to crowd, within the short compass of 480 years, the principal events, including the succession of the judges, which occurred from the exode to the founding of the temple; says, (c) “The Jewish chronologers were hard set to make out this detail, as Ganz himself honestly confesses. For,

1. By a curious invention, they included the first four servitudes in the years of the judges, who put an end to them, contrary to the express declarations of Scripture, which represent the administrations of the judges, not as synchronizing with the servitudes, but as succeeding them, (Judges ii. 18.) 2. They were forced to allow the fifth servitude to have been distinct from the administration of *Jephtha*, because it was too long to be included therein; but they curtailed a year from the Scripture account of that servitude, making it, instead of eighteen, only seventeen years; and they curtailed another year from *Ibzan's* administration, making it only six, instead of seven years. 3. They sunk entirely the sixth servitude, to the *Philistines*, of forty years, because it was too long to be contained in Samson's administration; and, to crown all, 4. They reduced *Saul's* reign of forty years (Acts xiii. 21.) to two years only! The dishonesty of the whole contrivance could be equalled only by its absurdity; furnishing internal evidence that the period of four hundred and eighty years, foisted into the Hebrew text of 1 Kings, is itself a forgery.”

The learned chronologer having thus proved the absurdity of the Hebrew chronology as it stands in the Masoretic text, proceeds to fill up the period of six hundred and twenty-one years, which, according to his system, elapsed from the exode of the Israelites to the foundation of the temple. This he does in the following Table.

(a) *Bedford's Scripture Chronology*, lib. v. c. 1. and *Millar's Church History*, chap. i. period 4.
(b) Book i. chap. v. dissert. v. (c) *Anal.* vol. i. p. 16, 17.

	Years.	B. C.
EXODE MOSES.....	40.....	1648
1. <i>Joshua</i> and the <i>Elders</i>	26.....	1608
First division of lands.....	0.....	1602
Second division of lands.....	0.....	1596
<i>Anarchy</i> or <i>Interregnum</i>	10.....	1582
I. Servitude <i>Mesopotam</i>	8.....	1572
2. <i>Othniel</i>	40.....	1564
II. Servitude <i>Moab</i>	18.....	1524
3. <i>Ehud</i> and <i>Shamgar</i>	80.....	1506
III. Servit. <i>Canaan</i>	20.....	1426
4. <i>Deborah</i> and <i>Barak</i>	40.....	1406
IV. Servit. <i>Midian</i>	7.....	1368
5. <i>Gideon</i>	40.....	1359
6. <i>Abimelech</i>	3.....	1319
7. <i>Tola</i>	23.....	1316
8. <i>Jair</i>	22.....	1293
V. Servit. <i>Ammon</i>	18.....	1271
9. <i>Jephthah</i>	6.....	1253
10. <i>Ibzan</i>	7.....	1247
11. <i>Elon</i>	10.....	1240
12. <i>Abdon</i>	8.....	1230
VI. Servit. <i>Philistin</i>	40 { 20.....	1222
13. <i>Samson</i>	20.....	1202
14. <i>Eli</i>	30.....	1182
<i>Samuel</i> called as a prophet.....	40 { 10.....	1152
VII. Servit. <i>Philistin</i>	20.....	1142
15. <i>Samuel</i>	12.....	1122
<i>Saul</i> appointed king.....	538.....	1110

From 2 Sam.
i. to xix.

If to this period of 538 years be added 80 years for the reigns of Saul and David, together with three, the number of years that Solomon had reigned when the foundation of the temple was laid, we shall find the ascertained period of six hundred and twenty-one years from the exode to the foundation of the temple exactly filled up, without inconsistency or absurdity in any one of the particulars.

“ But although we are indebted, says Dr Hales, to Josephus for this, and for supplying some material chasms or deficiencies in the sacred annals, such as, 1. The administration of *Joshua* and the *elders*, 25 years; 2. The ensuing anarchy, 18 years; 3. The administration of *Shamgar*, 1 year; and, 4. of *Samuel*, 12 : still his detail of the outline there (a) given requires correction.

“ For, 1. The one year assigned to *Shamgar*’s administration is too short, as is evident from *Deborah*’s account, Judg. v. 6.; I have therefore, continues our author, included it with *David Ganz*, in *Ehud*’s enormous administration of 80 years, and transferred the one year to *Joshua*’s, making that 26 years. 2. I have restored *Abdon*’s administration of 8 years, omitted by *Josephus*, and deducted it from the 18 years he assigns to the anarchy, thereby reducing the latter to its correct length of 10 years. 3. I have dated the first division of the conquered lands, in the sixth year, which *Josephus* reckoned in the fifth year; because *Caleb* was 40 years old when *Moses* sent him as one of the spies from *Kadesh-Barnea*, in the second year after the *exode*; consequently he was 39 years old at the *exode*; and therefore 79 years old, 40 years afterwards, at the arrival in

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Canaan; but he was 85 years old when he claimed and got the hill of *Hebron* for an inheritance; and therefore, $85-79=6$ years after the arrival in *Canaan*, (compare Numb. x. 11. xiii. 6. with Josh. xiv. 6—15.) 4. *Josephus* has omitted the date of *Samuel's* call to be a prophet, 1 Sam. iii. 1—19. which *St Paul* reckons 450 years after the first division of lands (Acts xiii. 19, 20), and which, therefore, commenced with the 10 last years of *Eli's* administration of 40 years. This last most important chronological character from the *New Testament* verifies the whole of this rectification, while it demonstrates the spuriousness of the period of 480 years in the present Masoretic text of 1 Kings vi. 1. from the exode to the foundation of Solomon's temple (a)."]

This may suffice for settling the chronology; and now to proceed to the history of this period. Our last connection of the sacred and profane history, we concluded with the life and adventures of *Sesostris*, who reigned in *Egypt*, and made a very distinguished figure in several parts of the world, while the Israelites were sojourning in the wilderness*; but, from the time that they entered in *Canaan*,*² they seem to have had no intercourse with the Egyptians, nor do their several histories at all interfere.

All history, indeed, in this period of time, is so defaced and corrupted with fables, that it is a hard matter to discern any lineaments of truth in it; and yet it may not be amiss to take notice of some of its remarkable events.

About the thirty-ninth year of *Ehud's* government in *Israel* (in the time of *Deucalion*, son of *Prometheus*), there happened such a deluge in *Thessaly* †, as gave (b) the poets an occasion to say, that all mankind was therein destroyed, and that *Deucalion*, and *Pyrrha* his wife, repopled the world by throwing stones behind them, which were instantly changed into men and women.

Much about this time lived *Phaëton*, a prince of the *Ligurians*, and a great astrologer, that applied himself chiefly to the study of the course of the sun; and because, in his days, the country of *Italy*, near the river *Po*, was so incommoded with extraordinary heats, that the earth became dry and barren for several years, (c) it hence became a renowned fable among the poets, that, by his misguidance of the horses of the sun (who is said to have been his father), he set the earth on fire.

About the fourteenth year of *Tolah's* judging *Israel*, *Ganymede*, the son of *Tros*, king of *Phrygia*, being beloved by *Jupiter* (as the poets fable), was by him carried up to heaven in the shape of an eagle, and, much against *Juno's* will, made cup-bearer to the gods.

About the sixth year of *Jair's* government, *Perseus* appeared in the world, and of

(a) *Hales's Anal.* vol. ii. p. 285, &c.

* [The mistake of this hypothesis, as well as of *Newton's*, who supposed *Sesostris* and *Shishak* to be the same sovereign, has been already pointed out. See Note †, vol. i. p. 620.]

*² We have formerly taken notice (vol. i. p. 478. lib. iii. cap. 5. in the Notes) of the series of Egyptian kings, written by *Eratoshenes*, and preserved by *Syncellus*; and here to proceed with that catalogue. In the year of the world 2523, reigned in *Egypt* *Echesius Caras*, one year. In the year 2524, began *Nilocris*, and reigned six years. In the year 2530, began *Myrtæus*, and reigned twenty years. In the year 2552, began *Thyosimares*, (the same that *Herodotus* calls *Myris* or *Myrios*), and reigned twelve years. In the year 2564, began *Thyrillus*, and reigned eight years. In the year 2572, began *Semiphucæus*, and reigned eighteen years. In the year 2590, began *Chuter Taurus*, and reigned seven years. In the year 2597,

began *Cheres Philosophus*, and reigned twelve years. In the year 2609, began *Chomo Ephtha*, and reigned eleven years. In the year 2620, began *Anchurius Ochus*, and reigned sixty years. In the year 2680, began *Penteathyris*, and reigned sixteen years. In the year 2696, began *Stamenes*, and reigned twenty-three years. In the year 2719, began *Sistosichemes*, and reigned fifty-five years. In the year 2774, began *Maris*, and reigned forty-three years. In the year 2817, began *Siphæus Hermes*.—In the year 2836, began *Phruron*, or *Nilus*.—In the year 2843, began *Amurrhœus*, and reigned sixty-three years, or to the year of the world 2906. Vide *Millar's Church History*, chap. i. period 4.

† [This happened in 1518 B. C.; 12 years before the commencement of *Ehud's* administration. *Hales's*.]

(b) *Ovid's Metamorphosis*, lib. i. fab. 7.

(c) *Ibid.* lib. ii. fab. 1.

him the fabulous writers have many strange stories; as, that he was begot by Jupiter on Danae in a golden shower; that when he came to be of age he conquered the Gorgons, with their queen Medusa, whose hair was interwoven with snakes; that he subdued the inhabitants of Mount Atlas, and first delivered Andromeda, by killing the sea-monster sent to devour her, and then married her; that afterwards he fought against the kings of Mauritania and Ethiopia, and, returning to Greece, overcame his uncle Prætus, and Polydectes king of the island Seriphus †.

From 2 Sam.
i. to xix.

Few things are more famous in the songs of the poets than the expedition of those valiant Greeks that accompanied Jason to Colchis; ‡ and the foundation of the story is conceived to be this:—That the Argonauts sailed to some part of Scythia, to carry off a share of the riches of that country, where the inhabitants gained a great deal of gold out of the rivers that ran from Mount Caucasus, by using sheep skins with the wool on, in order to take up that precious metal, from whence it was called the golden fleece. But the poets, out of their fruitful brains, have made large additions to the story, viz. that Jason fell in love with Hypsiple at Lemnos; and that at Colchos he married Medea, the king's daughter, who, being a famous witch, taught him how to kill the dragons that kept the rich fleece; how to conquer the bulls that vomited fire; and how to sow the serpent's teeth, out of which there arose an army of men; with many more fictions of the like nature.

But, of all the occurrences in this period, that which has been most celebrated by the poets is the siege of Troy; and the probable occasion of it is supposed to be this:

Not long before this remarkable event happened, the seas were very much infested with pirates, who, landing on the shores, seized upon all the women and cattle they could meet with; and so carrying them off, either sold them in some distant country, or kept them for their own use. Hereupon Tyndareus, the father of Helena, considering the beauty of his daughter, caused all her lovers (who were some of the principal men of Greece) to bind themselves by a solemn oath, that, if at any time she should be taken from her husband, they would join all their forces together to recover her: And so, being left to chuse whom she would have for her husband, she made choice of Menelaus king of Mycenæ, and brother to Agamemnon. Paris, one of the youngest sons of Priamus, king of Troy, upon the report of her beauty, came into Greece to see her, and was kindly entertained by Menelaus; but he soon took an opportunity to debauch his wife, and having robbed the husband of a great deal of treasure, found means to make his escape both with her and it.

Menelaus (as soon as his wife was gone) complained of the injury that had been done him to all the Grecian princes, and required the performance of their oath; which they readily consented to, and made his brother Agamemnon general of the forces that were to be employed in this expedition. The Greeks, however, being unwilling to enter into a war, if matters could be accommodated by a treaty, sent Ulysses, and some others, as ambassadors to Troy, to demand Helena, and all the things of value that were taken with her. What answer the Trojans made to this demand we are no where informed; but sure it is, that the ambassadors returned back so very much offended with their ill treatment, that, in a short time, they fitted out a vast armament.

But there was an unhappy accident, which mightily retarded the siege of the city, and that was a difference which fell out between Agamemnon and Achilles. Agamem-

† [With respect to the era of *Phaeton* and *Gany-mede* there is no evidence whatever; no good evidence indeed that such personages ever existed. *Perseus* is supposed to have been the most ancient of all the Grecian heroes, and founder of the city of *Mycenæ*, of which he was the first king. According to most chronologists he flourished in the year 1348

B. C. and was contemporary with the Hebrew judge *Gideon*. Sir Isaac Newton, however, brings him down to the year 1028 B. C.]

‡ [The Argonautic expedition was made, according to Hales, in the year 1225 B. C. during the administration of the judge *Abdon*.]

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non, as general, had the preoption of what part of the booty he pleased, and had then taken to himself a captive woman, the daughter of Chryses, the priest of Apollo, as Achilles, and the other commanding officers, had made choice of others; but being obliged to give up the priest's daughter, in atonement for the pestilence that was fallen upon the army, he sent and took Achilles's captive from him, which so exasperated this gallant warrior, that, to revenge himself effectually, he took up a resolution neither to fight himself, nor suffer any forces under him to engage; and this gave the enemy so great an advantage, that Hector, at the head of his forces, broke through the Grecian trenches one day, and set fire to the ships.

In the midst of this extremity, Patroclus, the bosom-friend of Achilles, not being able to stand neuter any longer, begged of Achilles to let him have the use of his armour, and the command of his troops, in order to repulse the Trojans; which he bravely attempted, but in the engagement fell by the hands of Hector, who took from him the arms of Achilles, and carried them off.

This conjuncture Agamemnon made use of to be reconciled to Achilles; and to this purpose, sent him back his captive-maid, with many very valuable presents, and made an excuse for his former behaviour, as well as he could. Achilles, in order to be revenged for the loss of his friend, laid aside all resentment, and joined the Greeks in the next battle, wherein he vanquished the Trojans; and, singling out Hector, never left pursuing him wherever he went until he had killed him. * With Hector fell the city, which was soon reduced to ashes, and its inhabitants forced to undergo a military execution.

But how severe soever the Greeks might be to their conquered enemies, several historians have observed, that, in their return home, they suffered almost as much misery as they had brought upon the Trojans. For this is the account which Thucydides gives of them. "By reason of their long absence, they found many alterations when they returned, so that some of them were driven by their neighbours from their ancient seats; many were expelled their countries by faction; others slain, soon after their arrival; and others deposed from their kingdoms, by such as had stayed at home." Nestor and Pyrrhus got safe home indeed, but were slain by Orestes. Idomeneus and Philoctetes, upon their return, were soon driven away to seek for new habitations. Agamemnon was, upon his first arrival, slain by his wife, and her adulterer Aegisthus, who had usurped his kingdom. Menelaus, having long wandered upon the sea, was forced into Egypt, before he could return to Sparta. Ulysses, after ten years peregrination, and the loss of his whole company, came home in a poor condition, and had much difficulty to recover the mastership of his own house. Ajax, the son of Oileus, was drowned; Teucer fled into Cyprus; and Diomedes to king Daunus. Some of the Locrians were driven into Africa, others into Italy, others into Sicily, and settled themselves in such numbers in those parts, that Greek became the current language of this island, and most of the east part of Italy obtained the name of Magna Græcia.

* Homer indeed gives us this account of the taking of Troy; but Virgil has informed us, that it was done by a large wooden horse, in which were inclosed several of the chief commanders of the Greeks; that the rest setting sail to the island of Tenedos, left Sinon to persuade the Trojans, that this horse was built upon a religious account, and was necessary for them to take into the city; that, by his craft and instigation, they pulled down part of the wall for that purpose; and so the Greeks, returning on a sudden, and entering the breach, opened the horse, and seized on the gates, and burnt the city. But another author, who perhaps might know the truth as well as Virgil, gives

us a different account of this matter; viz. that Æneas, Antenor, and Polydamus, having taken some disgust at king Priamus, agreed with the Grecians to betray the city to them, upon condition that they might retire with their men wherever they thought fit, provided they did not settle in Phrygia. To this purpose it was concerted, that the Grecians should set sail the day before to the island Tenedos, as if they were quite gone, but return in the dark of the night, when the Trojans thought themselves secure, and so be let in at the Scaean gate, over which there was a large image of an horse, which gave the first rise and occasion to all this story.

Thus the wise Ruler of the world was pleased to make one wicked nation the instrument of punishing another: But, whatever they severally suffered, the succeeding generations obtained this advantage by it,—That the dispersion of the Greeks occasioned a fuller peopling of distant countries, by an accession of these new inhabitants; and the taking of Troy became, in some years, the settled epocha, whereby all that were acquainted with the story of it might agree in their account of time. [It was taken 1183 years before Christ, and consequently in the last year of Samson, as ascertained by Hales.]

From 2 Sam.
i. to xix.

CHAPTER V.

FROM THE DEATH OF ABSALOM TO THE BUILDING OF THE TEMPLE.

THE HISTORY.

M. 2981,
e. or 4375
nt. Christ.
023, &c.
or 1036.

AS soon as David was informed of his son's death, all the joy of the victory was turned into sorrow. The king himself withdrew to a † private apartment, where he vented his grief in such a †² mournful exclamation as this: (a) "O my son Absalom, my

From 2 Sam.
xix. to 1 Kings
viii.

† The place to which David withdrew, in order to vent his grief, was (as Josephus tells us, lib. vii. c. 10.) to the top of one of the highest towers in the city; but the Sacred History calls it "the chamber over the gate," 2 Sam. xviii. 33. for the gate was a spacious place, and much of the same form with the forum among the Romans, not only the market for all commodities, but the place where all great assemblies of the people were likewise held. There were several buildings where the chief magistrates sat to administer justice, Ruth iv. 1, 2. and where the other affairs of the state were transacted; so that it is not improbable, that this chamber over the gate, where David went to weep, might be some withdrawing room in the place, where the privy-council was wont to meet. *Patrick's Commentary.*

†² Nothing certainly can be more moving and pathetic than the words which David utters upon this sad occasion; but whether it was David's deliberate wish that he had died in Absalom's stead, or only the effect of his excessive love and grief for him, is not so easy a matter to determine. St Austin seems to be on the affirmative side, and gives this reason for it:—That Absalom died impenitent, but might have lived to become a better man; whereas, if David had died, he had reason to hope well of his sal-

vation: But this supposition (as I take it) is not so well founded, since there is much more probability, that if Absalom had survived his father he would have grown more profligate than ever: triumphed in his good success; insulted and persecuted all his father's friends; and proved a wicked and abominable tyrant. But whether David's wish was deliberate or no, it is certain that his grief might be increased from this reflection, that himself, by his own sin in the case of Uriah, had been the unhappy instrument and occasion of his son's death; though some learned men have observed, that the oriental people were accustomed to express their passions with more vehemence than we, in these parts of the world, are wont to do, and that the repetition of the same word, (My son Absalom, O Absalom, my son, my son) is a style proper for mournful lamentation.

——Daphninque tuum tollemus ad astra,
Daphnin ad astra feremus, amavit nos quoque Daphnis.
Virg. Eccl. v.

"Αιάζω τὸν Ἀδωνιν, ἀπώλετο καλὸς Ἀδωνις
"Ωλετο καλὸς Ἀδωνις.

Bion. Id. 1.

Patrick's and Calmet's Commentaries.

(a) 2 Sam. xviii. 33.

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son, my son Absalom, would God I had died for thee! O Absalom, my son, my son!" And as for the army, instead of returning in triumph, they stole silently into the city, as if they had done amiss, and had lost instead of gaining the battle.

This Joab perceiving, and being sensible that such excessive grief, at this juncture of affairs, would be of great prejudice to the king, went boldly in to him, and * expostulated the matter with him in terms that might perhaps be necessary on that occasion, but did not so well become a subject's mouth. However, they had this good effect upon the king, that they roused him from his melancholy, and made him appear in public, to the great satisfaction of all his loyal subjects; but, as he thought himself very insolently used by Joab upon several occasions, from that time he made it his resolution to take the first opportunity of † dismissing him from being his general.

Those of his subjects who had appeared in arms against him, being now made sensible of the folly of their rebellion, became the forwardest for his restoration; but (what grieved him much) his own tribe—the tribe of Judah—seemed a little indifferent as to the matter; which made him send to Zadok and Abiathar, the chief priests, not only to remind them of their own duty, but to authorise them likewise to treat with Amasa (who, though he had commanded Absalom's army, was still a man of great authority in the tribe) to offer him his pardon, and, in case he would come fully into his interest, to promise him the generalship in the room of Joab.

Thus, all things conspiring to his happy restoration, the king left Mahanaim, and set forward on his journey to Jerusalem, when the chiefs of the tribe of Judah came to meet and conduct him over the Jordan. Old Barzillai, who had been very kind to the king in his exile, and supplied him with provisions while he continued at Mahanaim, hearing that he was upon his return, came to take his leave of him, and see him safe over the river; and when the king, in gratitude for his kindness, gave him an invitation to go with him to Jerusalem, the good old man modestly excused himself upon the account of his age, as having now lost the relish of the pleasures of a court, and desired rather to retire to his own estate, where he might spend the remainder of his days in quiet: But as he had a son, whose age was more proper to attend him, if his majesty would be pleased to confer any favour on him, the obligation would be the same; †² which David promised to do, and so, with much mutual blessings and salutations, they parted.

Among the many others who came to meet David upon this occasion, Shimei the Benjamite, who, not long before, had loaded him with curses and imprecations, came, †⁵ with a thousand men of his tribe, to beg pardon for his fault; and when Abishai

* Josephus concludes the speech which he supposes Joab to have made to David upon this occasion, in words to this effect:—"Pray, sir, does not your conscience, as well as your honour, reprove you for this intemperate tenderness, for the memory of so implacable an enemy? He was your son, it is true, but a most ungracious one; and you cannot be just to God's Providence without acknowledging the blessing of his being taken away. Let me intreat you therefore to shew yourself cheerful to your people, and let them know, that it is to their loyalty and bravery that you are indebted for the honour of the day; for if you go on as you have begun, your kingdom and your army will most infallibly be put into other hands, and you will then find something else to cry for." *Jewish Antiq.* lib. vii. c. 10.

† For he had sufficient reason to think of depressing a man who was grown so insufferably insolent and imperious. He had slain Abner most perfidiously in

cold blood; had killed Absalom against the king's express command; in his late bold reproof had insulted over his sorrow, and (if we may believe Josephus) threatened to depose him and give his kingdom to another. To such a height of arrogance will ministers sometimes arrive, when they find that their service is become necessary to their prince! *Patrick's Commentary.*

†¹ What David did for Chimham is uncertain; but as he had a patrimony in Bethlehem, which was the place of his nativity, it is not improbable that he gave a great part of it to Chimham and his heirs for ever; and that this was afterwards called "the habitation of Chimham," in the days of Jeremiah, Jer. xli. 17. *Bedford's Scripture Chronology*, lib. v. c. 4.

†³ The reason why Shimei came with so large a retinue, was to let David see that he was a man of some considerable rank, and capable of doing him great service among the people, which might be some

would have persuaded the king to have him killed, he resented the motion as an indignity put upon himself: And, being unwilling to eclipse the public joy with the blood of any one, gave him his royal word and oath that he should live.

From 2 Sam.
xix. to 1 Kings
viii.

Another remarkable person that came to wait upon David at this time, was the perfidious Ziba, with his fifteen sons and twenty servants. He had again imposed upon his master; and when he ordered him to make ready his ass, that he, among others, might go and meet the king, slid away himself to make his court first; so that Mephibosheth, being lame, was forced to stay at Jerusalem, (where he had all along * mourned for the king's absence) until the king arrived: But, when he was admitted into his presence, and the king seemed to be angry with him for not having accompanied him in his exile, he charged this seeming neglect upon the perfidy of his servant, and *² set his case in so fair a light, that the king revoked the hasty grant he had made in favour of Ziba, and put his estate upon the same foot of possession that it was before.

When David was passed the Jordan, he was willing to make all possible haste to Jerusalem; and as the tribe of Judah was the first that came to conduct him home, he (very probably to gratify them) marched on without waiting for the great men of Israel, who in all parts of the kingdom were making ready to join him. This occasioned some hot disputes between the princes of Israel and those of Judah: And as the king was loath to displease either party, and therefore did not care to intermeddle in the controversy, several of the tribes of Israel took an outward umbrage at this, which occasioned a fresh insurrection. Sheba, a Benjamite, and not unlikely one of Saul's family, made public proclamation, by the sound of trumpet, that "since the tribe of Judah had engrossed David to themselves, they might even take him; and, since all the other tribes he had visibly deserted, their wisest way would be to stand to their arms, and in like manner desert him;" whereupon a great many of the other tribes followed Sheba, but the men of Judah persisted in their loyalty, and conducted the king to Jerusalem. As soon as he arrived in the city, the first thing he did was to declare Amasa his general, and to order him to get together a sufficient body of forces, as fast as he could, to pursue after Sheba. † Amasa, however, found more difficulty in executing this order than

inducement to the king to grant him his pardon; or, very likely, he was one of the captains of a thousand in his own tribe, and might carry them all along with him, to make the stronger intercession for his pardon. *Pool's* Annotations.

* The words in the text are, that "he had neither dressed his feet, nor trimmed his beard, nor washed his clothes, from the day that the king departed," 2 Sam. xix. 24. These were some of the instances wherein the Jews were wont to express their mourning; and they are here mentioned by the historian as evidences of the falsehood of Ziba's information against his master, since no one, who neglected himself to this degree, could be supposed ambitious of a crown. "Not dressing his feet," may signify either not cutting his toe-nails, or his not washing his feet, which the Jews were accustomed very frequently to do, because of the bad smell which was natural to them, as well as the Arabians and some other nations; and therefore his omission of this could not but make him offensive to himself. "Not trimming his beard" was letting its hair grow negligently, and without any order. For the manner of the Jews was to cut the hair from the lip upwards, and what grew likewise on the cheek, but what was on the chin, and so backwards to the ear, that they suffered to grow; and "not washing his clothes" must denote

his putting on no clean linen, but wearing the same shirt all the while. *Calmet's* and *Patrick's* Commentaries.

*² Josephus brings in Mephibosheth pleading his excuse to David for not attending him, and expressing a grateful sense of his favours, in such like words as these:—"Nor has he only disappointed me in the exercise of my duty, but has been doing me spiteful offices to your majesty likewise: But you, sir, are so just, and so great a lover of God and truth, that I am sure your generosity and wisdom will never entertain a calumny to my prejudice. Our family has had the experience of your piety, modesty, and goodness, to a degree never to be forgotten, in passing over and pardoning the innumerable hazards and persecutions that you were exposed to in the days and by the contrivance of my grandfather, when all our lives were forfeited, in your power and at your mercy. But then, after all this gracious tenderness, your superadding the honour of taking me to your table (a person so obnoxious in regard of my relations) as a friend and as a guest, nothing could be either greater or more obliging than this." *Jewish Antiq.* lib. vii. c. 7.

† The people, having been harassed in the late civil war, were not perhaps so forward to engage in another. Some of them might not like to serve un-

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&c. or 4375.
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1036.

was expected; which when David understood, he sent Abishai with his guards (for he was resolved not to employ his brother Joab any more) in quest of Sheba, until Amasa, with the rest of the army, could join him. Exasperated at this, Joab, without any order, went along with his brother; and when Amasa came up with them (which was at Gibeon), and was going to take upon him the command of the whole army, he advanced, with all seeming friendliness, to salute him, but when he came within reach, he * took him by the beard, and stabbed him to the heart; and so, leaving him to wallow in his blood, proclaimed himself general in chief, and, taking the army with him, pursued after Sheba, † leaving orders for the forces that were coming up to follow after.

Sheba had gone about all the tribes of Israel to see if he could prevail with them to take up arms against David; but finding very few, that, upon second thoughts, were willing to engage in his measures, he was forced at last, with the few forces he had got together, to shut himself up in Abel, a fortified town in the tribe of Naphtali, in the northern part of Judea: But Joab was soon at his heels, and having besieged the town, and battered the walls, was making preparation for an assault, when †² a woman of great prudence called to the besiegers from off the walls, and desired to speak with their general. When Joab was come within hearing, the woman addressed herself to him in a very handsome manner, and told him, “That, †³ by a long prescription of time, it had

der a man who had lately headed a rebellious army against the king, and others, might have conceived so high an opinion of Joab, as not easily to be brought to serve under any other general. Any of these things might very well retard Amasa's recruits, and yet he might be loath to make such a report to the king, for fear that it might diminish his authority, and make him appear not so well qualified for the office where-in he had placed him. *Patrick's Commentary.*

* It was an ancient custom among the Grecians to take the person, to whom they had any address to make, by the chin or beard, “*antiquis Græciæ in supplicando mentum attingere mos erat,*” says Pliny, lib. xi. c. 45. and even to this day the Turks, in their salutations, do very frequently take one another by the beard, (*Vide Thevenot's Travels, c. 22.*) The Arabians have a great regard to the beard: The wives kiss their husbands, and the children their fathers beards, when they come to salute them; and when two friends meet together, their custom is, in the course of their compliments, to interchange kisses in this manner, (*Vide Darvieux Coustumes des Arabes, c. 7.*), as the like custom is still preserved among the Eastern people, the Indians, who take one another by the chin, when they would give an hearty salute, and say *bobba*, i. e. *father*, or *bi*, *brother*, as the author of the voyage to the East Indies relates. *Vide Peter de Valles's Travels.*

† So insolent was Joab become, upon the presumption that David durst not punish him, that as he ventured upon this bloody fact, so he imagined, that though the sight of Amasa's dead body might stop the march of those that came by it, yet, upon its being given out that he was again become their general, their love for him was such, that they would not scruple to follow him. *Patrick's Commentary.*

†² It seems not unlikely, that this woman was a governess in this city; for though that office was most commonly occupied by men, yet there want not instances of women, (as in the case of Deborah, *Judg. iv. 4.* and queen Athaliah, *2 Kings xi.*) who have been

employed in the administration of civil affairs. If she was invested with any such authority, she was the properest person to desire a parley with the general; and reason good she had to desire it, because she knew the present temper and fears of the citizens and soldiers both, viz. that, considering the imminent danger they were in, they were generally desirous of peace, and restrained from it only by Sheba's power and authority. *Pool's Annotations.*

†³ In the beginning of this woman's speech to Joab, there is something that seems both abrupt and obscure. “They were wont to speak in old time, saying, they should surely ask counsel at Abel, and so they ended the matter,” *2 Sam. xx. 18.* According to this translation, the sense of the words is,—“This city, which thou art about to destroy, is no mean and contemptible one, but so honourable and considerable for its wisdom, and the wise people in it, that when any difference did arise among any of the neighbouring places, they used proverbially to say, We will ask the opinion and advice of the men of Abel about it, and we will stand to their arbitration, and so all parties were satisfied, and disputes ended.” So that her words, according to this sense, are an high commendation of the city of Abel, for its being a place (time out of mind) very eminent for the wisdom and prudence of its inhabitants. But there is another translation in the margin of our bibles, which seems to be more natural, and makes the woman speak in this manner:—“When the people saw thee lay siege to the city, they said, Surely he will ask, if we will have peace; for the law prescribes, that he should offer peace to strangers, much more then to Israelitish cities; and if he would once do this, we should soon bring things to an amicable agreement; for we are peaceable people, and faithful to our prince.” So that, according to this interpretation, the woman both modestly reproved Joab for the neglect of his duty, and artfully engaged him in the performance of it. *Patrick's Commentary, and Pool's Annotations.*

always been a custom, founded (*a*) on the law of God, whenever the Hebrews came before any city, to offer peace in the first place, even though the inhabitants were of another nation; much more then ought this to have been done to a people that were all of the same blood, and the greatest part of them loyal subjects to the king." To which Joab replied, "That he had no ill design against the people of the city, only as they harboured a rebel and a traitor, whom he demanded of them:" whereupon the woman persuaded the inhabitants to cut off Sheba's head, and throw it over the wall; which when they had done, Joab raised the siege, and withdrew with his army to Jerusalem; where his services, upon this occasion, were thought to be such, that the king found himself obliged to restore him to his post of captain-general.

From 2 Sam.
xix. to 1 Kings
viii.

Not long after this, there happened a sore famine in the land, and the long continuance of it (which was for three years) made David suspect that it did not proceed from any common cause, but was inflicted by the immediate hand of God; and when he consulted the Divine oracle to know the occasion of it, he was given to understand that Saul's cruelty to the Gibeonites in slaying so many, contrary to the treaty then depending between him and them, was the cause of it. Hereupon David sent to the Gibeonites to know † what satisfaction they desired; and when he was told that they expected seven of Saul's posterity to be delivered to them, he complied with their demand, and sent two sons of Rizpah, Saul's concubine, and †² five of Merab, his eldest daughter, but spared Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, for the love which he had for his father when alive. These seven the Gibeonites took and hung upon gibbets; and there they intended them to hang †³ until God should send rain upon the earth, for the want of this occasioned the famine; but Rizpah being informed of this, had a tent made of sackcloth (pitched near the place) for her to live in, that so by the help of her servants she might * keep watch day and night, to fright away the birds and beasts from doing any hurt to the dead bodies. It was not long, however, before God sent plentiful showers of rain, so that Rizpah had the liberty to take down the bodies: and when David was informed of this her pious care, he was moved thereby to take up the bones of Saul, and Jonathan his son, (who, for five and thirty years before, had been buried under a tree at Jabesh-Gilead) and, together with these seven sufferers of the same family, gave them an honourable interment in the tomb of Kish, the father of Saul, at Zelah, in the country of Benjamin.

(*a*) Deut. xx. 10.

† This may seem strange, unless we suppose (as Josephus does), that, when David consulted God, he told him, not only for what crime it was that he sent this punishment, but that he should take such a revenge for it as the Gibeonites should desire: And there was this farther reason for humouring the Gibeonites herein, because they had been modest under their sufferings, and never made any complaint to David of the injuries that had been done them. *Patrick's Commentary.*

†² Michal is put in the text indeed, 2 Sam. xxi. 8. but not by mistake, as some will have it; for though Michal was not the wife of Adriel, but Merab; yet those children which Merab had by Adriel, Michal brought up; and the Jews observe, upon this occasion, that whoever brings up a pupil in his house, is in Scripture said to have begotten him. Nor is it in Scripture only, that this form of expression takes place, but in heathen authors likewise. For Agamemnon and Menelaus are called sons of Atreus, because Plisthenes (who was their father) being dead, Atreus their grandfather took care to bring them up. *Howell's*

History in the Notes, and Patrick's Commentary.

†³ It was a positive law to the Israelites, Deut. xxi. 22, 23. that, if any man was hanged, he should be buried before night; but the Gibeonites, being not of that nation, thought themselves not obliged by that law. They are remarked, indeed, to have been a remnant of the Amorites, (2 Sam. xxi. 2.) and among them (as some have imagined) it was a barbarous custom in those days (as it certainly prevailed in after-ages), to hang up men, in order to appease the anger of the gods in time of famine. *Patrick's and Calmet's Commentaries.*

* It is an obvious remark from hence, that crosses and gibbets, whereon malefactors were executed, did not stand high from the ground, since the dead bodies of such were in danger of being torn by carnivorous creatures; and what we may farther observe is, that it was an ancient custom for the relations of such as were thus executed, to watch their dead bodies. Thus Homer (*Iliad* xxiii.) mentions Venus, as taking care of Hector's body, and the story of the Ephesian matron every one can tell. *Calmet's Commentary.*

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 &c. or 4375.
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 1023, &c.
 or 1036.

David, in the beginning of his reign, had so humbled the Philistines, that they were not able to bring any great numbers into the field, but still, as long as they had men among them of a gigantic stature, and such as were fit to be their champions, they did not cease to disturb the peace of Israel, insomuch that David, in the latter end of his reign, had four engagements with them: in the first of which, himself had like to have been slain by one of these monstrous large men, had not Abishai come timely in to his aid, and killed the Philistine; upon which occasion, it was unanimously agreed in the army, that the king should never more go into the battle, lest a † life so precious should be lost.

In the other three engagements, nothing remarkable happened, but the death of four of these huge men, by the hands of some of David's chief officers; except we may mention here another valiant act, ‡² which might probably be done at this time.

The Philistine army lay in the valley of Rephaim, between David's camp and Bethlehem, where they had likewise a garrison: but notwithstanding this, upon David's intimating a desire to have some of the water of Bethlehem, three of his chief captains broke through the enemy's camp, and having drawn some water out of the well, brought it to David; but he, understanding at what price it had been purchased, even at the hazard of all their lives, would not drink it, but offered it to the Lord.

About two years before David's death, (whatever might be the occasion of it) so it was that || he was desirous to know the number of his people; and accordingly gave his chief officers orders to go through the whole kingdom, and bring him an account of all the people. Joab endeavoured to remonstrate against it, in a manner more modest than was customary with him; but the king's orders were positive, and therefore Joab, with other officers to assist him, beginning on the east side of Jordan, came round by the north parts of Canaan, and returned to Jerusalem at the end of nine months and twenty days, with an estimate, that in Israel there were eight hundred thousand men fit to bear arms, and ||² five hundred thousand in Judah; but of the men that belonged to the tribes of Levi and Benjamin there was no list given in.

† The expression is very beautiful and significant in the text. "Thou shalt no more go out with us to battle, that thou quench not the *light* of Israel," 2 Sam. xxi. 17. For good kings are in Scripture justly called the *light* of the people, (1 Kings xi. 36. and Psal. cxxxii. 17.) because the beauty and glory, the conduct and direction, the comfort, and safety, and welfare of a people, depend upon them, and are derived from them. *Pool's Annotations.*

‡² It is commonly observed by the Jewish commentators, that, though David expressed a desire for some of the water of Bethlehem, because it was the place of his nativity, and the water not improbably very excellent in its kind, yet he did not do this with any intent, that any should venture their lives to fetch him it. In this action, however, they have remarked three wonderful things, viz. That three men could break through the whole host of the Philistines; and when they had so done, durst stay to draw water out of the well, and then carry it away, with an high hand, through the same host to David: But they might have added a fourth remark, viz. That they attempted this at the gate of Bethlehem, where a garrison of the Philistines kept a strong guard. *Patrick's Commentary.*

|| The words in the text are—"And again the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and he moved David against them to say, Go number Israel

and Judah," 2 Sam. xxiv. 1. But in the original there is no nominative case at all. We find it however supplied in 1 Chron. xxi. 1. where it is said, that "Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel:" But then, by the word *Satan*, there is no necessity why we should understand the *Devil* properly so called, because any evil minister or counsellor that advised David to number the people, will answer the signification of the word as well; and that there was some such counsellor who prompted David to this action, seems to be implied in these words of Joab:—"Now the Lord thy God add unto the people (how many soever they be) an hundred-fold, and that the eyes of my lord the king may see it, but why doth my lord the king delight in this thing?" 2 Sam. xxiv. 3. Whereby it seems plain, that the matter had been debated in the king's council before, and that, though Joab was one who opposed it, David was more influenced by the persuasion of some other. *Le Clerc's Commentary.*

||² If we compare this account with what we meet with in 1 Chron. xxi. 5. we shall find a great difference; for there the men of Israel are said to be three hundred thousand more than they are here, and, on the other hand, the men of Judah are said to be thirty thousand less: but as for the former difference, it is but supposing that, in this account recorded in Samuel, the standing legions (which amounted in all

David had no sooner received the account, but his heart misgave him that he had done wrong; and it was not long before the prophet Gad was sent to bring his sin to remembrance, and to offer him the choice of three punishments, || famine, pestilence, or war, which he liked best. From 2 Sam. xix. to 1 Kings viii

Where every punishment was so destructive, it was hard to tell which to prefer; but David at last made choice of the pestilence, which accordingly was sent, and, in ||² a very short time, destroyed no less than seventy thousand men. The plague began in the extreme parts of the kingdom, but every moment made advances nearer and nearer to Jerusalem; which when the king and inhabitants of the city heard, they clothed themselves in sackcloth, and, with all humility, cried unto God for mercy. A little before the offering up of the evening sacrifice, (or before the time of evening prayer) there appeared an angel over Jerusalem brandishing a flaming sword in his hand, as if he were going to destroy it; whereupon David implored God's mercy for the people, what vengeance soever might light upon him, who was chiefly guilty: But as he was expecting some heavy stroke, the angel sent Gad to him with orders to go immediately, and build an altar in the threshing-floor of Araunah the Jebusite; which accordingly he did, and having purchased the place, and some oxen for sacrifice, (a) "for ||³ fifty shekels of silver," he offered burnt-offerings and peace-offerings, whereof the Lord declared his acceptance by fire from heaven, and so the plague ceased.

It is not improbable, that God at this time revealed to David the exact frame and fashion of the temple; that from the acceptableness of his sacrifices, he perceived that this threshing-floor was the place which God had designed for the situation of his temple; that therefore he not only purchased that, but the whole top of the Mount of Mo-

to two hundred and eighty-eight thousand, i. e. twenty-four thousand with their officers, upon guard every month) are not here mentioned, though they be in Chronicles; and as to the latter difference, it is but adding twenty-four thousand legionary soldiers to the tribe of Judah, and the difficulty is removed: though some are apt to think, that in this case there is no need of this supposition, because it is a common thing in Scripture to mention a round sum, either of men, or years, though upon a strict computation there may be some wanting. *Patrick's Commentary.*

|| There is another difference in this account, and what we meet with in the book of Chronicles. There the famine is said to be for three years only, but here it is said to be for seven. The Septuagint indeed makes it no more than three; and for this reason some have imagined, that the seven is an error crept into the text, especially considering that three years of famine agree better with three days pestilence, and three months flight before an enemy. But there is no reason to suppose any error in the text; it is but saying, that in Chronicles the author speaks of those years of famine which were to come for David's sin only, but in Samuel, of those three years of famine likewise, which were sent for Saul's sin, 2 Sam. xxi. Now, within one year after the famine that was sent for Saul's sin, was David's sin in numbering the people; the intermediate year then was either the Sabatical year, wherein the people were not allowed to sow nor reap, or a year of such excessive drought, that the crop came to little or nothing. Upon either of these accounts we may properly enough say, that there were four years of famine before, and three more being now added to them, make up the seven

that are here mentioned. *Pool's Annotations.*

||² The words in the text are:—"So the Lord sent a pestilence upon Israel; from the morning even to the time appointed." The time appointed was the space of three days; and therefore some are of opinion, that the plague lasted so long; but then others urge, that this does not agree with what follows, viz. that "God repented him of the evil," and commanded the angel, who smote the people, to stay his hand. They therefore conclude, that as the word *Moed* properly signifies an assembly, the time moed must be when the people met together at the time of evening sacrifice, i. e. about the ninth hour of the day; and consequently that the plague continued from the morning to this time, which is about nine hours, or the eighth part of three days; God, in his mercy, having been pleased to mitigate the rigour of his judgment, upon the sincere repentance of his people. *Patrick's Commentary and Pool's Annotations.*

(a) Sam. xxiv. 24.

||³ There is again another difference in the account which we have in the Chronicles and this in Samuel. In the Chronicles it is said, that David bought the threshing floor, &c. for six hundred shekels of gold; but in Samuel, it is said for fifty shekels of silver. Now a shekel of gold being of twelve times more value than a shekel of silver, it makes the disparity very large; and therefore (to account for this) it is generally supposed, that in the whole David made two purchases: first he bought the threshing-floor and oxen, for which he gave fifty shekels of silver; but that afterwards all the ground about it (out of which the courts of the temple were made) cost him six hundred shekels of gold. *Patrick's Commentary.*

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riah likewise, at the price of (a) six hundred shekels of gold, for the ground-plot of this temple; and that all the remainder of his time was employed in providing whatever was necessary for the purpose of building it; in settling the number of the officers, and the manner of the daily service of those that were to attend it; next to this, in settling his civil affairs, and appointing (b) judges, magistrates, and all inferior officers, whose business it was to punish offenders, and to keep all others to their duty; then in settling (c) his military matters, particularly the twelve captains for every month, with their legions, to attend on the king in their turns; then (d) the princes of the twelve tribes, and afterwards (e) several other officers.

But while he was contriving these things in the best manner, he seems to have been taken, either with a dead palsey, or some other distemper, which chilled his blood, so that he could not be warm in his bed. His physicians therefore advised, that, to supply him with † a natural heat, a virgin should lie in the same bed with him; for which purpose Abishag of Shunem, in the tribe of Issachar, was brought to him, and made concubinary wife, though he had never any carnal knowledge of her.

Adonijah, who (next after Absalom) was David's eldest son, taking the advantage of his father's age and infirmity, began to entertain thoughts of making himself king, presuming that his father either could not, or would not obstruct him. He was indeed a prince of exquisite beauty, admired by all, and so indulged by his father, that he †² never contradicted him in any thing; but, as he had a great deal of Absalom in his complexion, he failed not to imitate him in his equipage, attendants, and splendid manner of life.

By some means, however, he had gained Joab, the general of the forces, and Abiathar, the high priest, over to his party; and by their advice it was, that he invited all the king's sons, except Solomon, and all the great men of Judah, except Nathan the prophet, Benaiah, captain of the guards, and the officers of the army (who, with Zadok the other high priest, were not for him), to a sumptuous entertainment at Enrogel, where the purpose of the meeting was, as soon as the company had well feasted, to proclaim him king in the room of his father. Nathan, who knew †³ God's designation, David's choice, and the people's interest in the matter, having got intelligence of this, went and acquainted Bathsheba with it, and advised her by all means to go and press the king †⁴ to declare Solomon his successor, since things were now come to that ex-

(a) 1 Chron. xxi. 25.

(b) Ibid. xxvi. 29. to the end.

(c) Ibid. xxvii. 1 to 15.

(e) Ibid. xxix. 1. to 20.

(d) Ibid.

† It is the observation of Galen, in his fifth book of the Power of Simple Medicines, that nothing so effectually procures heat and health as the application of any thing young to the stomach: the advice of David's physicians therefore was not amiss; but it had been sinful advice, and such as he could not have followed, had not this young woman, whom he took to bed to him, been his concubinary wife. In those days such wives were allowable: and that she served him in this capacity is very manifest from the account we have of her in Scripture; for, whereas, it is said, that "the king knew her not," this certainly implies, that he might have had carnal knowledge of her without sin or scandal; whereas it is said, that, "she lay in his bosom," this phrase every where in Scripture denotes what was the sole privilege of a wife or concubine, Gen. xvi. 5. Deut. xiii. 6. Nor can we imagine, why Adonijah's desiring her in marriage had been so heinous a crime in Solomon's account, had

she not been the king's wife, and he, by this means, had designed to revive his pretensions to the crown. *Pool's Annotations.*

†² It is remarked of David, that one of his great faults, and what had led him into many premunires, was his extraordinary indulgence to his children, of whom he was so fond, that he seems to have overlooked their errors, and not reprov'd them, though he was bound to do it by a plain law, Lev. xix. 17. and could not but know, that the high priest Eli was severely punished for this neglect. *Pool's Annotations.*

†³ In 2 Sam. vii. 12. God had promised David by Nathan, that he would set upon his throne a son that should proceed from him, which plainly signified, that none of his sons already born were to be the person; and in 1 Chron. xxii. 8, &c. he declared by the same prophet, that, after his father, Solomon should reign, and build him an house. This Adonijah could not but know; and therefore his setting himself against the decree of heaven made his sin the greater. *Patrick's Commentary.*

†⁴ This power of naming a successor was first as-

tremity, that, without her doing this, all their lives must certainly be in danger. Bathsheba pursued her instructions, went to the king, and, having acquainted him with Adonijah's conspiracy, desired him to name her son his successor, according to the oath that he had formerly made to her. While she was thus talking with the king, Nathan came in, and confirmed what she had said; so that David immediately declared Solomon his successor, and thereupon commanded Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the captain of his guards, with the other officers and ministers of state, to mount him † on the mule that he himself used to ride; and, having in this manner †² conducted him to Gihon, there to let Zadok and Nathan anoint him, and then, by sound of trumpet, to proclaim him king of Israel. All this was accordingly done; and the people of Jerusalem, by their loud shouts and acclamations of joy, gave testimony of their approbation of David's choice.

From 2 Sam.
xix. to 1 Kings
viii.

But how thunder-struck was Adonijah and his company, when, being just upon the point of proclaiming him king, they heard the sound of the trumpet, and the shouts of the people attending Solomon! As soon as they were informed of the occasion, each man thought proper to shift for himself; but as for Adonijah, he * fled to the altar for sanctuary, till, having obtained of Solomon a promise of life, upon condition that he would never attempt any thing for the future against his government, he was conducted into the king's presence, where he made his obeisance to Solomon, in token of thankfulness for his preservation, and in acknowledgment of his superiority.

sumed by David, and, for some time afterwards, (as appears by the story of his grandson Rehoboam) was continued in the Jewish state. It was a privilege that, in after-ages, was granted to several good princes, but among the Israelites it did not prevail long, because the constitution of other nations (to which the Israelites affected to conform themselves) was different. *Pool's Annotations*, and *Patrick's Commentary*.

† All the rest of David's sons were wont to ride upon mules when they went abroad, 2 Sam. xiii. 29. but David had a mule peculiar to himself, and the mounting Solomon upon it was a sufficient declaration in his favour. For as it was capital (according to Maimonides) to ride upon the king's mule, or sit on his throne, or handle his sceptre without his order; so, on the contrary, to have the honour to ride upon the king's horse by his appointment, was accounted the highest dignity among the Persians, as appears by the story of Mordecai in the book of Esther. *Calmet's Commentary*.

†² Some commentators are of opinion, that Gihon was the same with the fountain of Siloam; but this is a gross mistake, since Gihon was manifestly to the west, and Siloam to the east of Jerusalem. There is little or no certainty likewise in the notions of some Rabbins, who pretend that, in ancient times, kings were always anointed by the side of a fountain, by way of good omen, or that the perpetual running of the stream might be an emblem of the perpetuity of their king's reign. In the history of Saul, who was their first king, and of David, who was three times anointed, we find no mention made of any spring or fountain. As these fountains however were places of great concourse, (for there were not many in Jerusalem) the chief reason, we may imagine, why David ordered Solomon to be anointed at one of these

was, that the thing might be done as publicly, and in the presence of as many spectators as possible. *Patrick's Commentary*.

* There is no precept in the law to make the altar a privileged place; but, in conformity to the customs of other nations, the Jews seem to have done it. Other nations had certainly this custom, as appears from that passage in Virgil:

Talibus orabat dictis, arasque tenebat. *Æneid* vi. And it seems not unlikely, that, as the people, when they came into the land of Canaan, had cities appointed by God, whereunto the manslayer might flee; so, while they continued in the wilderness, the camp of the Levites might serve for the same purpose. Nay, from the words in Exodus xxi. 14. where God orders the wilful murderer "to be taken from his altar, that he may die," it seems unquestionably true, that even in the land of Canaan, the altar continued a sanctuary for those who fled unto it; but then the question is, to what altar Adonijah fled? Whether to the brazen one which Moses made, and which was now at Gibeon, or that which his father had lately erected in the threshing-floor of Araunah? It is expressly said, 1 Kings i. 50. that "he caught hold of the horns of the altar;" but we can hardly suppose, say some, that the altar in the threshing-floor, which was run up in such haste with stones and turf, was made in that figure. But what should hinder us from supposing, that, as David had built a place for the reception of the ark of the covenant on Mount Sion, he had likewise built there an altar for the oblation of the daily sacrifices, in the exact form of the original one that was then at Gibeon, and that it was to this altar, and neither of the others, that Adonijah betook himself for refuge. *Le Clerc's*, *Patrick's*, and *Calmet's Commentaries*.

A. M. 2981,
&c. or 4375.
Ant. Chris.
1023, &c.
or 1036.

This inauguration of Solomon, however, was a little too hasty and private; and therefore David, intending a more public coronation, ordered all the princes of Israel and Judah, and all the officers of his court and army, to attend him: When, having recovered a little from his late indisposition, he stood up, and, * in a solemn oration, put them in mind of God's goodness to him, and of his designation of Solomon to succeed in his throne, and to build him a temple. And therefore, since he had reserved that honour for his son, he earnestly recommended to him a strict fidelity and piety towards God, and a zealous discharge of this important trust. To this purpose he gave him the plan which he had made for the execution of this undertaking, and an account of the treasures which he had provided for the perfecting of this great work. He gave him also a list of the priests and Levites, and the courses in which they were to wait in the temple. He gave him likewise the schemes and regulations of the officers of his court, of the civil officers, of the treasures, and of the superintendants of the revenues belonging to the crown; and, having made a large oblation of money out of his own private estate for the building of the temple, by his example and persuasion, he prevailed with the princes and the people to contribute (according to their abilities) to so good and pious a work. And when he found himself successful herein (for what they gave upon this occasion amounted to an immense sum), he concluded all with a solemn thanksgiving to God, and a prayer, that he would enable Solomon to perfect what he had thus designed and recommended.

The next day there was a very great and solemn sacrifice, and much rejoicing among the people. David, upon this occasion, had Solomon anointed a second time in a more public manner; ordered that Zadok should be the high priest in the room of Abiathar, who had publicly espoused the interest of Adonijah; and (to put an end to all disputes after his decease) had him for the future seated on a royal throne, and made sole regent of the kingdom during his life-time.

Not long after this, David perceiving his end approaching, called for Solomon, *² and

* The speech which Joshephus puts in David's mouth upon this occasion, is to this purpose:—"I am now to inform you, my countrymen and brethren, that I have had it a long time in my thoughts to erect a temple to the Lord, and have treasured up a mighty mass of gold and silver toward the charge of the undertaking; but it hath pleased God in his Providence, by the mouth of his prophet Nathan, to put a stop to my design, upon this consideration, that he would not have the foundation of his holy house laid by hands that have been dipped in blood, which mine inevitably have been (though in the blood of your enemies), in the wars I have been forced to engage in for the necessary defence of your liberties. But at the same time that he forbid me to do this, the prophet informed me, that God had transmitted the care of the whole work to my son and successor. Our father Jacob (as you all very well know) had twelve sons, and yet Judah was chosen by common consent to be ruler of all the rest. You know likewise, that I myself (though there were then six brothers of us) was advanced by God to the government, and that none of the rest thought themselves injured: Wherefore I must now, in like manner, require it of you, and of all your sons, that you submit cheerfully and dutifully to my son Solomon, and that ye do it without any grumbling, or civil dissension, because it is from God's immediate command and commission that he derives his authority. Put the case now, that God

should have set a stranger over you, how great a folly and madness would it have been for you to murmur at it? But how thankful ought you to be for the choice of so near a relation, when you yourselves are partakers of the honour that is done to your brother. There is nothing I so much long for, as to see God's gracious promises take a speedy effect, and the whole people put into a lasting possession of the blessings they are to enjoy under the reign of Solomon. And all this, my dear son (says he, turning to Solomon), will be made good, and every thing succeed to your wish, so long as you govern according to piety and justice, with a respect to your duty both towards God and man, upholding a reverence to the laws, and treading in the steps of your forefathers: But whenever you pass these bounds, there is nothing but ruin and misery to be expected." *Jewish Antiq.* lib. vii. c. 11.

*² Josephus introduces David as taking his last leave of his son Solomon in these words:—"And now, son, I am going to my fathers, and you, that I leave behind me, are in due time to follow, which is no more than paying a common debt to nature. There is no returning from the grave; and when we are once gone, we have done with this world for ever. Wherefore, while I am yet among the living, and before it be too late, pray let me remind you of the same things once more.—Govern your subjects according to justice. Worship that God from whom

gave him his last exhortation, which was, to be constant in his duty to God, (α) “to walk in his ways, and † keep his statutes and his commandments, his judgments and his testimonies, that he might prosper in all that he did;” and then, descending to some particular affairs relating to the state, he charged him to do justice to Joab, for the many murders he had been guilty of; to shew kindness to the sons of Barzillai, for the support their father had given him in his distress; and though he himself had not put Shimei to death for his past offences, yet whenever he should prove guilty again, not to spare him. Having thus ended his exhortation to his son, in a short time after he died in the seventy-first year of his age; after he had reigned forty years in all, || seven in Hebron, and three and thirty in Jerusalem; and * was buried in that part of the city which himself had taken from the Jebusites, and called after his own name.

From 2 Sam.
xix. to 1 Kings
viii.

you have received your dignity as well as your being, as you are bound to do. Observe his precepts, and keep his laws, as they have been handed down to you from Moses; and have a care that you never forsake them, either for fear, flattery, or any passion or interest whatsoever; for otherwise you can never hope for the blessings of God's favour and providence: but if you behave yourself with reverence and submission towards God, as you ought to do, and as I wish you may do, your kingdom will be established to yourself, and the succession of it continued to your family from generation to generation. *Jewish Antiquities*, lib. vii. c. 15.

(α) 1 Kings ii. 3—11.

† Under these four words are comprehended all the laws of Moses. Statutes were such constitutions as had their foundation, not in reason, but in the will and pleasure of God; such was the prohibition of sowing seeds of different kinds together, &c. Commandments were moral duties that were founded in the nature of things, and carried their reason along with them; as not to steal, not to murder, &c. Judgements were the laws belonging to civil governments, and the dealings of one man with another; such are all those laws that are recorded in the twenty-first and following chapters of Exodus: and testimonies were such laws as preserved the remembrance of some great events, and testified to men the loving-kindness of the Lord; such as the Sabbath, the pass-over, and the rest of the feasts. *Patrick's Comment*.

|| In 2 Sam. v. 5. it is said, that he reigned seven years and six months in Hebron, which, together with the three and thirty in Jerusalem, will make his reign to be in all forty years and a half. To solve this difficulty (as some of the Jews esteem it) they have devised a conceit, that to punish David for his adultery with Bathsheba, God sent upon him a leprosy, which continued for six months, in all which time he was looked upon as dead, and not accounted to reign: But they never considered, that these months were part of his reign in Hebron, before he committed that adultery in Jerusalem. The true account of the matter therefore is, that it is very usual in Scripture-computation to omit smaller sums, and only reckon by a round number; for which reason these six months, which were but part of a year, are not taken notice of in the account both of Kings, 1 Kings ii. 11. and Chronicles, 1 Chron. xxix. 26, 27. *Patrick's Commentary*, and *Pool's Annotations*.

VOL. II.

* After this account which Josephus gives us of David's several speeches before his death, he informs us,—“that he was buried at Jerusalem with a solemnity of royal pomp and magnificence, that was glorious to the highest degree; and that over and above the splendour of the ceremony, his son Solomon deposited in his monument an inestimable treasure, from which, when Antiochus, surnamed the Pious, besieged Jerusalem, Hircanus the high priest, took to the sum of three thousand talents, and therewith bribed them to raise the siege; and that many years after this, Herod, surnamed the Great, took another immense sum from thence, which enabled him to rebuild the temple.” Among several nations indeed, it was customary to bury along with princes, and other great men, various things of value that they took delight in while they lived. The Egyptians were used to this; and about their mummies are frequently found very precious ornaments. When Alexander the Great had Cyrus's tomb opened, there was found therein a bed of gold, a very rich table, drinking cups, and many fine vestments; but notwithstanding all this, several learned men look upon this whole account of Josephus as a mere fable: for to what purpose, say they, did Solomon bury all this treasure under ground, when he had so much occasion for it; when he was forced to borrow money of the king of Tyre, and burden his people with so many heavy taxes to supply his excessive expences? How came it, that the other kings of Judah, who were frequently put to the necessity of stripping the temple of its precious furniture to satisfy their greedy enemies, never once adventured to lay hold on this treasure? How came it to escape the hands of the Chaldeans, and other nations that so often had the plundering of Jerusalem? Or why should Hircanus violate this depositum, which his predecessors esteemed more sacred than the holy vessels of the Lord? These are questions that cannot easily be resolved; and, (what is a farther confutation of this story) in that very book from whence Josephus is supposed to have taken it, it is never once said that Hircanus broke open David's tomb. The words of that spurious author are, that Hircanus, “while he was besieged by Antiochus, opened a treasure-chamber which belonged to some of David's descendants, and that, after he had taken a large sum of money out of it, he still left a great deal in it, and sealed it up again.” But this is quite a different thing, and has no manner of rela-

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When David was dead, Solomon succeeded to the throne; and to secure his possession, took an occasion in a short time to rid himself of his adversaries. Adonijah, in his father's life-time, made bold pretensions, but was defeated, and pardoned by Solomon, upon condition that he would become a good subject, and give him no further molestation; but by the persuasion of Joab and Abiathar, he was now put upon another bold project, which was to desire Abishag (the late king's concubine in his old age) in marriage, hoping thereby to strengthen his interest, and to be able to play an after-game for the crown. To this purpose he prevailed with Bathsheba the queen-mother to speak to the king; but the king was so far from granting his request, that he was shocked at the boldness of it, and suspecting some treasonable design at the bottom, sent immediately and had him put to death. In the next place he banished Abiathar; and having inhibited him from the exercises of his priestly office, confined him to his country house, and put Zadok in his place; and when he heard that Joab was fled into the tabernacle for sanctuary, upon his refusing to come out at his command, † he ordered Benaiah (whom he afterwards made general in his room) to go in and kill him there. But when Shimei, who deserved the like fate for his gross abuse of the late king, was brought before him, he only † confined him to Jerusalem as a prisoner at large, but with a strict injunction not to move out of the place upon pain of death. Upon this condition he thankfully accepted of his life, and for some time kept within the bounds of his confine-

tion to the sepulchre of David. As to the real sepulchre of David, it is certain that it was always held in great veneration among the Jews. It was in being in St Peter's time, for so he tells the people, Acts ii. 29. Dio (in *Adriani vitâ*) informs us, that part of it was fallen down in the emperor Adrian's reign. St Jerom relates, that he himself used frequently to go and pray at it; and modern travellers (as we took notice before) describe some magnificent monuments hewed in a rock not far from Jerusalem, which are doubtless very ancient, but they themselves do not agree that they were the sepulchres of the kings of Judah. It is somewhat unaccountable however, that the place of this prince's sepulchre, which both the Chaldeans and the Romans, when they took Jerusalem, thought proper to spare, should now be so entirely lost, that we cannot find the least remains of it. But though Providence has so ordered it, that the place of David's sepulchre should not at present be known, yet there does not want an eternal monument of his most excellent genius. The book of Psalms, which for the most part was composed by him, does publish the glory of its author more than the most pompous eulogies, and the author of Ecclesiasticus (chap. xlvii. 2. &c.) has consecrated this epitaph to his memory, which is more durable than either marble or brass:—"As the fat is taken away from the peace offering, so was David chosen out of the people of Israel. He played with lions as with kids, and with bears as with lambs; he slew a giant when he was young, and took away reproach from the people; for he called upon the most high Lord, and he gave strength to his right hand to slay this mighty warrior, and to set up the horn of his people. So the people honoured him with ten thousands, and praised him in blessings of the Lord; for he destroyed the enemies on every side, and brought to nought the Philistines, his adversaries:—In all his works he praised the holy one most high, and blessed the Lord with

words of glory:—He set singers also before the altar, that by their voices they might make sweet melody, and daily sing praises in their songs. He beautified their feasts, and set their solemn times in perfect order:—The Lord took away his sins, and exalted his horn for ever; he gave him a covenant of kings, and a throne of glory in Israel." *Calmet's Commentary*, and his Dictionary, under the word *David*.

† It was formerly very customary among princes to employ their officers, or greatest confidants, in such like executions. Among the Romans, the soldiers were always the persons who carried to prison, to torture, or to execution, such as were found guilty of any offence; and this Tertullian makes an argument to dissuade Christians from engaging in the wars, lest thereby they should be obliged to imprison, punish, or execute malefactors. In Dan. ii. 24. we read, that Nebuchadnezzar sent Arioch, who was chief commander of his troops, to destroy the wise men of Babylon, because they could not interpret his dream; and therefore we need less wonder, that we find Solomon employing Benaiah, the captain of his guard, on the like office: But whether he did not first drag Joab from the altar before he slew him, for fear of polluting the holy place with blood, or whether Solomon did not rather think fit to have him killed even at the altar, and let all men see, that no place, though never so sacred, should secure any man from the hand of justice, commentators have not agreed. *Calmet's* and *Patrick's* Commentaries.

†² Shimei, as we read, was a very powerful man. When he came to meet king David, and to beg pardon for his offence, he had a thousand of his own tribe to accompany him, 2 Sam. xix. 17. and therefore Solomon might think proper to confine him to the city of Jerusalem, that, being removed from the place where his family and interest lay, to one where he was but a stranger, and sufficiently odious for his former ill treatment of the late king, he might be in-

ment; but having some slaves who had run away, and had entered themselves into † the service of Achish, king of Gath, he imprudently went to reclaim them, and upon his return, by Solomon's order, was put to death.

From 2 Sam.
xix. to 1
Kings viii.

Having thus secured his kingdom at home, by confining, or cutting off the heads of the faction that was against him, Solomon bethought himself of strengthening his interest abroad by foreign alliances; and to this purpose married the daughter of †² Pharaoh king of Egypt, and appointed her at first an apartment in his own palace; but after he had finished the temple, built her a very stately palace adjoining to his own, which she badly deserved; for in process of time, this woman, among others, contributed not a little to the perversion of Solomon.

He began his reign, however, with a good sense of religion upon his mind; for which end, taking the chief of the officers and nobility along with him, he went to Gibeon, where the original tabernacle and altar, that were made in the wilderness, were kept, and there offered a thousand sacrifices, in acknowledgment of God's kindness to him, in placing him upon his father's throne. In the night following, when God appeared to him in a vision, and promised to grant whatever he should ask, he begged him to give him †³ a wise and understanding heart, and (†⁴ considering his youth and

capable of raising any tumults or seditions; and that, being in this public theatre, all his words and actions might be narrowly observed, which, considering his busy and wicked temper, might give Solomon a fair advantage against him; and (as the manner of some is) the very prohibition itself might probably inflame his desire to transgress it. *Pool's Annotations.*

† Achish had been so great a friend to David, that though David had conquered the Philistines, he suffered him still to retain the title of a king, and only to be tributary to him; so that there was a friendly correspondence between his city and Jerusalem, insomuch that Shimei might easily hear by somebody or other that had been at Gath, that his servants were there. These servants, in all probability, were such as he had purchased with a considerable sum of money, and their running away was not only a loss, but a great affront likewise to their master; and therefore, partly out of rage, and partly through covetousness, he undertook this dangerous journey, presuming, that a thing which might be done secretly and speedily, would never come to Solomon's ears; that in the space of three years time, Solomon might have forgot his injunction; or that if he remembered it, he would not be so rigid as to put it in execution; especially since he went out of Jerusalem, not through wantonness, or any contempt of authority, but merely to recover what he had lost, which he might think was a thing excusable. *Pool's Annotations* and *Patrick's Commentary.*

†² It may seem somewhat strange, that in all the history of the Jews, from the time of Moses to this of Solomon, no mention should be made of the kings of Egypt, as if they had no concern in the affairs of Canaan, but were wholly diverted some other way: But for this, their own historians account, when they tell us, that, during this space of time, the "Egyptian kings did nothing worth recording," *Diodor. Biblioth. lib. i. p. 29.* All these kings of Egypt were called Pharaohs; but Pharaoh was not a proper name, but a title of dignity only, which imported the same as sul-

tan or emperor. They had, besides this, other names; and Clemens Alexandrinus, in a passage taken from Alexander Polyhistor, tells us, that the proper name of this Egyptian king, whose daughter Solomon married, was Vaphres. *Le Clerc's* and *Calmet's Commentaries.*

†³ Hereupon some Jewish annotators have observed, that though Solomon, in his great modesty, might request of God no more than the gift of government, or (as he expresses it) "an understanding heart to judge the people, and to discern between good and evil," 1 Kings iii. 9. yet God, out of his abundant grace, gave him a general knowledge of all other things, as the following history informs us: And that, whereas other men gather their knowledge from study and observation, Solomon had his by an immediate inspiration from God, insomuch that "he, who went to bed as ignorant as other men, awaked in the morning like an angel of God." But though his knowledge of things was in a great measure infused, yet he did not therefore neglect his study. "He gave his heart to seek, and search out, by wisdom, concerning all things under the sun;" in which search (as himself testifies, Eccles. i. 18.) he took no small pains: So that his gifts extraordinary did not supersede the use of other means in the acquisition of knowledge, but, by application and experience, he perfected what he had so advantageously received from the hands of God. *Patrick's* and *Calmet's Commentaries.*

†⁴ The words of Solomon himself are,—"I am but a little child; I know not how to go out, or how to come in," 1 Kings iii. 7. From whence some have inferred, that he was not above twelve years old when he spake them; but this must be a gross miscomputation. His father, when he left the kingdom to him, calls him a wise man, 1 Kings ii. 6. 9. The foregoing story shews, that he had already sat some time on the throne; and therefore he calls himself a child, not in respect of his years, (for most agree that he was twenty when he began to reign) but his skill in governing the people, and managing the affairs of

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inexperience) such qualities as were necessary for the due government of the people committed to his charge; which petition God was so well pleased with, that, over and above the wisdom which he asked, he promised to give him such affluence of riches and honour, as no king in his days should be able to equalise. When Solomon awaked out of sleep, he perceived that this was a dream sent from God; and therefore, returning to Jerusalem, he presented himself before the ark of the covenant, which was placed in a tabernacle, that David had made for it, and there he offered sacrifices in abundance.

Solomon (as we said) had obtained of God a promise of the gift of wisdom; and it was not long before he had an opportunity of shewing it, to the great satisfaction of all his subjects. † Two women, who both lived together in one house, were brought to bed about the same time, and one had overlaid her child. She who found the dead child by her, accused the other of having stolen away her living child, and left her dead one in its place: The other pertinaciously denied the thing; so that the question was, "To whom did this living child belong?" And to determine this, Solomon commanded some that stood by, to take and †² cut the child in two, and to give to each woman half; whereupon the real mother begs that the child may be saved, even though it be given to her adversary, but the pretended one is clearly for dividing it; which gave Solomon a full conviction that she, who expressed a tenderness and compassion for the child, was its true mother, and accordingly ordered it to be given her.

state. This was a modest expression in Solomon; but it is an observation of Aristotle, in his book of politics, that young men are unfit for government, because their consultive power is imperfect; which, though it may not be a general rule, was delivered by Solomon himself, in his more mature years, for a maxim; for "woe to the land, (says he, Eccles. x. 16.) whose king is a child." *Patrick's Commentary.*

† These two women are said in the text to be harlots, but the Hebrew word (as we took notice in the case of Rahab) may equally signify an *hostess*, or one who kept an house of public entertainment; and that it is so to be taken here, we have these reasons to presume:—That as all public prostitution was severely forbidden by the law, Deut. xxiii. 17. women of this infamous character durst not have presented themselves before so just and so wise a king; that women of this lewd behaviour seldom do become mothers of children, and when they chance to have any, are not so solicitous for their preservation, but rather rejoice when they have got rid of them. There is no reason to suppose then, that these women were common harlots; and yet it is generally thought that they were both unmarried persons, and guilty of fornication, because no mention is made of their husbands, whose office it was (if they had any) to contest the matter for their wives. *Pool's Annotations, and Calmet's Commentaries.*

†² Solomon knew at once, that the only sign that would discover the true, would be her affection and compassion and tenderness for her child; and therefore, in order to distinguish between the two, his business was to make trial of this: And if we suppose, that when he commanded the child to be divided, he spake with a sedate countenance, and seeming earnestness, (as the true mother's petition to the king makes it apparent that he did), then we may suppose

farther, not only the two women, but all the people present, with horror and admiration, expecting the execution of the thing; which, when it ended in so just a decision, quite contrary to what they looked for, raised joy in every breast, and gave a more advantageous commendation to the judge: And yet Abarbinel, the Jewish commentator, thinks, that all this was no great proof of Solomon's extraordinary wisdom, nor could it beget that fear or reverence which the text says (1 Kings iii. 28.) it procured to his person. His opinion therefore is, that Solomon made a discovery of the truth antecedent to this experiment; that, by observing the countenance, the manner of speech, and all the motions of the women, he discerned the secret of their hearts, and penetrated to the bottom of the business; and that his commanding the child to be divided afterwards, was only to notify to the company what he before had discovered. However this be, it may not be improper, upon this occasion, to mention an instance or two out of profane history, of a singular address (though much inferior to this) in discovering such secrets as seemed to be past finding out. To this purpose Suetonius (in his life of Claudian, chap. 15.) tells us, how that emperor discovered a woman to be the mother of a young man, whom she would not own for her son, by commanding her to be married to him; for the horror of committing incest obliged her to declare the truth; and, in like manner, Diodorus Siculus relates, how Ariopharnes, king of the Thracians, being appointed to arbitrate between three men, who all pretended to be sons of the king of the Cimmerians, and claimed the succession, found out the true son and heir, by ordering them to shoot each man his arrow into the dead king's body; which one of them refusing to do, was deemed the true claimant. *Pool's Annotations. Patrick's and Calmet's Commentaries.*

The wisdom of the king soon shed an happy influence over all his dominions, and every subject was in some degree or other made partaker of it. All Judah and Israel lived in the greatest security; and all the neighbouring nations either paid him tribute, or were his friends and allies. He ruled over all the countries and kingdoms † from the Euphrates to the Nile, and in many places his dominions extended beyond the Euphrates. He had a great number of horses and chariots of war. Instances of his wisdom were as numerous as the sands of the sea, and in learning and knowledge he †² surpassed all the orientals and the Egyptians. In a word, he was the wisest of mankind, and his reputation was spread through all nations. He composed, or collected, * three thousand proverbs, and a †³ thousand and five poems. He knew the virtue of all plants and trees, from the highest to the lowest; and in his books treated of the nature of †⁴

From 2 Sam.
xix. to 1 Kings
viii.

† The words in the text are, “And Solomon reigned over all kingdoms, from the river unto the land of the Philistines, and unto the border of Egypt,” 1 Kings iv. 21.; for the bounds of his kingdom were to the East, the Euphrates, which is here and in other places of Scripture called the River, without any addition; to the West, the country of the Philistines, which bordered upon the Mediterranean Sea; and to the South, Egypt. So that Solomon had tributary to him the kingdoms of Syria, Damascus, Moab, and Ammon, which lay between Euphrates and the Mediterranean; as indeed, without such a number of tributary kingdoms, we cannot conceive how the country of Israel could have furnished such a constant supply of provisions, and other things necessary for the support of this prince’s grandeur. *Patrick’s* and *Calmet’s* Commentaries.

†² There were three nations in the east of Canaan that were very famous for their wisdom and erudition; the Chaldeans, beyond the Euphrates; the Persians, beyond the Tigris; and the Arabians, on the nearer side of the Euphrates, a little towards the south: But whether the Persians and Chaldeans were remarkable for their learning in Solomon’s days, is much doubted among commentators. The book of Job sufficiently shews, that the Arabians (for of that nation was Job and his friends) were famous for their learning in ancient times: And as to the Chaldeans and other oriental people, since the sons of Noah took up their habitation about Babylon and the neighbouring countries, it is reasonable to suppose, that where mankind first began to settle themselves into regular societies, there arts and sciences first began to appear. The Egyptians, however, pretend to a precedency in this, and several other accomplishments. They say that the Chaldeans received the principles of philosophy at first from a colony that came from Egypt, as Diodorus indeed makes mention of such a colony conducted by Belus: But the Chaldeans, on the other hand, maintain, that from them it was that the Egyptians received their first instructions, and (according to some) that Abraham was the person who first communicated to the Chaldeans the knowledge of astronomy and other sciences. However this be, Solomon received from God a perfect knowledge of all that useful and solid learning, for which the Eastern people and the Egyptians were justly famed; for (as it follows) he was a great moral philosopher, a great natural philosopher, and an excellent poet. *Patrick’s*

and *Calmet’s* Commentaries.

* Josephus, who loved to magnify every thing that concerned Solomon, instead of three thousand proverbs, tells us, that Solomon composed three thousand books of proverbs: the greater certainly is our loss, (if the thing were credible) because all the proverbs of Solomon that we have now are comprised in the book that goes under that name, and in his Ecclesiastes; and yet some learned critics are of opinion, that the nine first chapters of the book of Proverbs were not of Solomon’s composure, and that the number of proverbs, which properly belong to him, is no more than six hundred and fifty. *Grotius’s* Annotations and *Calmet’s* Commentary.

†³ These, one would think, were poems enough for a person that had so much more other business as king Solomon had; but Josephus, who is never content, makes him the author of so many volumes of poetical compositions; and the Septuagint indeed, as well as other interpreters, make the number of them to be no less than five thousand songs or odes: but of all this number we have none remaining but the Song of Songs, as it is called; except the hundred and twenty-sixth psalm, which (in its Hebrew title) is ascribed to Solomon, may be supposed to be one of these. The Psalter of Solomon, which contains eighteen psalms, (a work that was found in Greek in the library of Ausburg, and has been translated into Latin by John Lewis de la Cerda) is supposed by the learned to be none of Solomon’s, but of some hellenistical Jew, much conversant in reading the sacred authors, and who had composed them in imitation of the Psalms of David, whose style he closely pursued, and had inserted several passages of the prophets, (especially of Isaiah and Ezekiel) which he accommodated well enough to his purpose. However this be, these eighteen psalms were not unknown to the ancients; for they were formerly in the famous Alexandrian manuscript, which is with us, as may be seen by the index, which is still to be found at the end of the New Testament, though the psalms themselves have either been torn out of the book, or lost by some accident. *Le Clerc’s* and *Calmet’s* Commentaries, and his Dictionary under the word *Solomon*.

†⁴ The several books which treated of the nature and virtue of animals, as well as plants, are supposed to have been lost in the Babylonish captivity; but Eusebius (as he is quoted by Anastasius) informs us, that king Hezekiah, seeing the abuse which his sub-

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all kinds of beasts, and birds, and reptiles, and fishes; insomuch that * there was a concourse of strangers from all countries to hear his wisdom, and ambassadors from the most remote princes that had heard of his fame.

As soon as Hiram, king of Tyre, understood that Solomon was † made king of Israel, he sent ambassadors to him to condole his father's death, and congratulate him upon

jects made of Solomon's works, by placing too much confidence in the remedies which he prescribed, and the natural secrets which he discovered, thought proper to suppress them all. Notwithstanding this, since his time many books concerning the secrets of magic, medicine, and enchantments, have appeared under the name of this prince; and several pieces have been quoted, such as The instructions of Solomon to his son Rehoboham; The testament of Solomon; The book of the throne of Solomon; The books of magic composed by the demons under the name of Solomon; The clavicula, or key of Solomon; The ring of Solomon; The contradiction of Solomon, &c. which were most of them very wicked and pernicious tracts, to which the authors prefixed this great name, to give them more credit and sanction. It is somewhat strange, however, that Josephus should inform us, that Solomon composed books of enchantments, and several manners of exorcisms, or of driving away devils, so that they could return no more; and that he should further assure us, that himself had seen experiments of it by one Eleazar a Jew, who, in the presence of Vespasian, his sons, and the officers of his army, cured several that were possessed. *Jewish Antiquities*, lib. viii. c. 2. and *Calmet's Dictionary* under the word *Solomon*.

* It is a conceit of one of the Jewish interpreters, that all the kings of the neighbouring countries went to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and that upon their return their subjects came to them to hear what he had said; but as we hear of none but the queen of Sheba who came to visit Solomon, we cannot but think, that if any other crowned heads had resorted to him, the history would have recorded them as well as her. The words denote no more than that the kings of all the neighbouring nations sent their ambassadors, and people of every land, that had heard of Solomon's fame, came to see him; for "no spectacle, says an ingenious author, is more lovely and grateful than a wise and good king; all men flock to see him, and to partake of his pious and prudent mind. They that see him are loath to leave him, and they that hear of him are as desirous to see him as children are to find their unknown father. *Dion. Prusæus Orat. de Regno*.

† The fourth chapter of the first of Kings is chiefly taken up in recording the prime ministers and officers of Solomon's court, the compass and extent of his kingdom, the happiness and security of his subjects, the pomp and magnificence of his living, and the excellence of his own wisdom and erudition.

* This Hiram was doubtless the son of that other Hiram who sent David timber and artificers wherewith to build his palace; for if, according to Josephus, the temple was built in the twelfth year of Hi-

ram's reign, and the fourth of Solomon's, this Hiram could not be the same with him who sent David men and materials; because that Hiram was upon the throne when David took Jerusalem, which happened to be three and thirty years before Solomon began his reign. There are two letters which passed between this Hiram and king Solomon, recorded by Josephus, and for the authenticity of which he appeals both to the Jewish and Tyrian records, that are to this effect:

"Solomon to King Hiram, greeting.

"Be it known unto thee, O king, that my father David had it a long time in his mind and purpose to erect a temple to the Lord; but being perpetually in war in his days, and under a necessity of clearing his hands of his enemies, and making them all his tributaries, before he could attend this great and holy work, he hath left it to me, in a time of peace, both to begin and finish it, according to the direction, as well as prediction of the Almighty. Blessed be his great name for the present tranquillity of my dominions! And, by his gracious assistance, I shall now dedicate the best improvements of this liberty and leisure to his honour and worship. Wherefore I make it my request, that you will let some of your people go along with some servants of mine to Mount Libanus, to assist them in cutting down materials towards this building (for the Sydonians understand it much better than we do); and as for the workmens reward, or wages, whatever you think reasonable shall be punctually paid to them."

"Hiram to King Solomon.

"Nothing could have been more welcome to me, than to understand, that the government of your blessed father is, by God's Providence, devolved into the hands of so excellent, so wise, and so virtuous a successor. His holy name be praised for it! That which you write for shall be done with all care and good will: for I will give orders to cut down and export such quantities of the fairest cedars and cypress-trees as you shall have occasion for. My people shall bring them to the sea-side for you, and from thence ship them away to what port you please, where they may lie ready for your own men to transport them to Jerusalem. It would be a great obligation; after all this, to allow us such a provision of corn in exchange as may stand with your convenience; for that is the commodity that we islanders want most." *Jewish Antiq. lib. viii. c. 2.* But notwithstanding all his appeal to the Tyrian records, some have suspected Josephus as to the genuineness of these two letters, especially where they find him bringing in Hiram,

his accession to the throne: And in a short time after, Solomon, in return, sent an embassy to him, desiring him to supply him with wood and workmen, and to lend him his assistance in building the temple of the Lord. Hiram very readily complied with his desire, and sent him word, that he would order cedar-trees and fir-trees to be cut down upon Mount Libanus; that his people should put them on floats, and bring them by sea to the harbour of Joppa; and that from thence Solomon (who contracted to give Hiram such a quantity of wheat, and wine, and oil, &c. every year for the maintenance of his household and workmen) might send and fetch them to Jerusalem.

From 2 Sam.
xix. to 1 Kings
viii.

All things being thus agreed on, the preparations for the building of the temple went on apace. Seventy thousand proselytes, who were the remains of the ancient Canaanites, Solomon employed in carrying burdens upon their shoulders; fourscore thousand hewers in the mountains; and three thousand six hundred in overseeing the work. Of his own subjects, he sent thirty thousand to work with the king of Tyre's men in the quarries of Libanus: And (to finish the inner part of the temple, as well as frame some of its choicest vessels) Hiram * sent him a most skilful artist of his own name, whose mother was of the tribe of Dan, but his father a Tyrian; and (what was prodigious) his abilities extended to all kind of works, whether in gold, silver, brass, or iron, whether in linen, tapestry, or embroidery; and by his direction all the curious furniture of the temple was both designed and finished.

And now all things being in readiness, the foundation of the temple was laid in the † fourth year of king Solomon's reign, in the year of the creation two thousand nine hundred and ninety-two, four hundred and eighty years after the Israelites escape from the Egyptian bondage; and in the *² space of seven years and an half, was completed with such dexterity, that neither *³ hammer nor axe, nor any tool of iron, was heard in

speaking of Tyre as if it had been an island, whereas it is plain, that the Old Tyre, which was then standing, and must be the place here spoken of, was situate on the continent. *Le Clerc's Commentary.*

* In former times, among the Hebrews, there had been very excellent workmen, who knew how to cut and engrave precious stones, to cast and work upon metals, &c. but this was before they came into the land of Canaan, in the time of Moses, when Bazaleel and Aholiah were excellent in many different arts, which were necessary for the work of the temple; but as the Scripture acquaints us, that they had their skill by inspiration from God, it does not appear that they had any successors: And after the people had got possession of Canaan, they neglected all manufactures, and applied themselves wholly to agriculture, and feeding of cattle; so that, in the time of Solomon, there were no professed artists that could undertake the work of the temple, but in Tyre and Sidon there were many; for, both in his Iliads and his Odyssey, Homer gives the people of these two places this character, whom (upon every turn) he calls Πολυδαίδαλους, i. e. "excellent artists in several kinds of works." *Patrick's Commentary.*

† If it be asked, Why Solomon did not begin the building of the temple sooner, and even in the first year of his reign, since his father had left him a plan, and all things necessary for the undertaking? Abarbinel's answer is,—That Solomon would not make use of what his father had prepared, but was resolved to build this temple all at his proper cost and charge. He therefore put into the treasure of the Lord's house all that David had dedicated to the work; and to ga-

ther together as much gold and silver as was necessary to defray so vast an expence, four years can be accounted no unreasonable time. Nay, even suppose that he made use of the treasure which his father had amassed, yet, if the materials that his father had provided lay at a considerable distance, and were left rude and unfashioned, it would cost all this time to form them into the exact symmetry, wherein the Scripture represents them, before they were brought together, especially considering that the very stones which made the foundation were very probably vast blocks of marble, or porphyry, 1 Kings v. 17. and all polished in the most exquisite manner. *Patrick's Commentary and Pool's Annotations.*

*² The temple itself indeed was but a small edifice, but the many courts and offices that were about it, made the whole a vast pile, and the exquisiteness of the art, and fewness of the artists that could be employed about it, made a longer time requisite. It must be owned however, that, considering all things, Solomon made an extraordinary dispatch; for if the building of Diana's temple at Ephesus employed all Asia for the space of two hundred years, and no less than three hundred and sixty thousand men, for twenty years together, were taken up in erecting one pyramid, (as Pliny, lib. xxxvi. c. 12. affirms) no reasonable man can wonder, that this temple was seven years and an half in building. *Pool's Annotations and Calmet's Commentary.*

*³ The Jewish doctors have entertained a very odd conceit, upon the occasion of this passage in the Sacred History, wherein the temple is said to have been built without noise. They tell us, that the demon

A. M. 2981, it all the while that it was building. Such admirable care and contrivance was used &c. or 4375. in preparing and adjusting the materials before they were brought together !
Ant. Chris. 1023, &c.
or 1036.

THE OBJECTION.

“ **BUT** how commendable soever the zeal both of David and his son Solomon, to build the temple of the Lord, might be, yet we are much in the wrong, if we think that this would be any commutation for the blood and cruelty which the sacred historian seems to leave charged upon them.

David had given Saul the most solemn assurance, upon oath, that (a) ‘ he would not cut off his seed, nor destroy his name out of his father’s house :’ he knew full well too, that it was an express command in the law, that (b) ‘ children should not be put to death for the father’s, but that every man should be put to death for his own sin :’ And yet, notwithstanding this double obligation, we find him tamely giving up seven of Saul’s innocent progeny (which he had promised to protect) into the hands of bloody-minded men, by them to be hung up, as long as they thought fit, in order to atone for what Saul had done amiss, and to appease the wrath of God, as if he (like the idol Moloch) could be pleased with the tortures of the innocent, or took delight in the oblation of human blood.

Saul’s family was very numerous indeed, and some of them might, in process of time, grow up to be another Ishbosheth to David, and give him some disturbance in his usurpation. It was highly necessary, therefore, to dispatch those of whom he might have any such apprehension, and (if any were to be left) to spare such only as were lame and impotent, and incapable to dispute his title. This, in all probability, was the motive of his shewing some favour to Mephibosheth, because (c) he was lame in both his feet ; and yet he was minded to cut him short and keep him low, when he granted away his estate (without ever giving him a fair hearing) to a vile and perfidious servant ; and, notwithstanding his clearing his character from every false aspersion thrown on it, still continuing the base informer in the full possession of half of it.

What the zeal of king (d) Saul to the children of Israel and Judah might be, that led him into the error of destroying the Gibeonites, we cannot tell ; but surely it is unaccountable, why God did not immediately chastise him for it, instead of deferring his punishment, and at last transferring it to his posterity. His posterity perhaps might be justly included in his punishment ; but what had the whole nation done to deserve

Asmodeus drove Solomon once from his throne, and reigned in his place, while that prince was forced to travel over the several kingdoms and provinces of the world ; but that, at his return to Jerusalem, he defeated Asmodeus, and having chained him so that he could do no hurt, he compelled him to teach the art of cutting stones for the temple, without making any noise ; which was done, as they say, not with any tool or instrument, but by the help of a worm called *samir*, which cuts and polishes stone with a marvellous facility. But the foundation of all this fiction (as Bochart, Hieroz. p. 2. lib. vi. c. 11. has observed) is laid in somebody’s mistaking the sense of the word *samir*, which signifies a very hard stone called *smiris*, that is of use to cut and polish other stones, and

which Solomon’s workmen might possibly have recourse to upon this occasion. But the true reason why no noise was heard in the building of the temple was, that the stones, and all other materials, were hewn and squared, and fitted at a distance, so that when they were brought to the place where the temple was to stand, there was nothing to do but to join them together. And this might be done, not only for the ease and convenience of the carriage, but for the magnificence of the work, and the commendation of the workmen’s skill and ingenuity. *Pool’s Annotations* and *Calmet’s Dictionary* under the word *Solomon*.

(a) 1 Sam. xxiv. 21.

(b) Deut. xxiv. 16.

(c) 2 Sam. ix. 13.

(d) Ibid. xxi. 2.

a famine of three years continuance? (a) 'That be far from thee, O Lord, to slay the righteous with the wicked, and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee; for shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?' From 2 Sam. xix. to 1 Kings viii.

We readily grant, that David's resisting the importunity of his officers, and promising Shimei his life, when so many were ready to put him to death, was an act of great generosity, considering the heinousness of his crime; but this promise he utterly cancels, when he leaves it with his son, as his dying injunction, (b) 'not to hold him guiltless, but to bring down his hoary head to the grave with blood.' Nor can we conceive for what reason he, who durst not attempt to punish Joab in his lifetime, should now upon his death-bed (a proper season for forgiveness) recommend the dangerous and ungrateful task to his son, (c) who was but young, and as yet unsettled on his throne.

Our blessed Saviour lays it down for a rule of good policy among princes, to keep an estimate of their forces; for (d) 'what king going to war against another king, says he, sitteth not first down, and consulteth, whether he be able, with ten thousand, to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand?' And therefore, if David was minded to take an account of the military men in his kingdom, where was the great offence against God? David, who knew himself best, and with what purpose he numbered the people, might perhaps have reason to say, 'I have sinned, (e) I have done wickedly;' but his following words, viz. 'these sheep, what have they done?' are a sad imputation upon the Divine justice; for, upon the presumption that they were innocent, how could they, with any justice, be punished with a raging pestilence for the transgression of their king?

The truth is, there are so many contradictions and inconsistencies in this whole story, (f) that there is no reconciling it to itself. In one place it is said, that (g) 'God moved David to number Israel,' and in another, that (h) 'Satan provoked him to it.' But it were highly profane and blasphemous to say that God conspired with Satan in this act, on purpose to destroy a multitude of innocent persons. In like manner, to say (i) 'that there were in Israel eight hundred thousand valiant men that drew the sword, and in Judah five hundred thousand,' besides women and children, old men that were unfit for war, and two entire tribes that were not numbered, is a thing incredible. For (k) if in a nation the men that are able to bear arms are generally accounted the fifth part of it, the sum total of the ten tribes only that were numbered will amount to above six millions, which (together with the tribes unnumbered) will make up a multitude too large for so small a country as that of Canaan to maintain.

What the constitution of the Jewish monarchy was, it is difficult to say: Kings, from the first, might have the right of nominating their successors; but certainly David would never have postponed his eldest son Adonijah, had he not been in his dotage, and therefore influenced by his wife to choose her son Solomon: But, after all, what great offence had Adonijah done in desiring Abishag for his wife? Or how does it appear that, by soliciting this alliance, he affected to supplant Solomon of the kingdom? To have put him under some civil restraint might have been excusable, but to take away his life upon that account, without any regular process or license given him to make his defence, was, to the last degree, arbitrary and tyrannical. Especially, considering that himself was never known to set any bounds to his love, and, in marrying of Pharaoh's daughter, had trampled upon a law, which obliged the king as well as the people (l) 'to make no covenant' with idolatrous nations, nor to enter into marriages with

(a) Gen. xviii. 25.

(b) 1 Kings ii. 9.

Judah four hundred, threescore and ten thousand."

(c) Calmet's Comment.

(d) Luke xiv. 31.

(f) *Christianity as Old as the Creation*, p. 266.

(e) 2 Sam. xxiv. 9. The account in 1 Chronicles xxi. 5 is much higher, for there it is said, that all they of Israel "were a thousand thousand, and an hundred thousand men, that drew the sword; and of

(g) 2 Sam. xxiv. 1.

(h) 1 Chron. xxi. 1.

(i) 2 Sam. xxiv. 17.

(k) *Le Clerc* in locum.

(l) Exod. xxxiv. 16. and Deut. vii. 3, 4.

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them, for fear that their daughter should draw them aside 'to go a-whoring after their gods,' whereof himself was a notorious instance.

What the constitution of the Jewish church was, and how far subordinate to the civil power, it is no easy matter to determine; but Solomon seems to have transcended his authority, when (a) 'he thrust out Abiathar from being high priest unto the Lord,' merely for advising Adonijah to marry the late king's concubine. But well might the writer of his life extend the royal prerogative beyond its just bounds, when we find him so very lavish in his account of other matters, as quite to transcend all possibility of truth. For what shall we say to his making Solomon hold a long conference with God in his sleep, and representing that as a Divine revelation which was only the result of an idle dream? What shall we say to the thousand (b) burnt-offerings which he makes him sacrifice at Gibeon, and all on one altar only, that was of no larger (c) dimensions than five cubits square? To the forty thousand stalls (some interpreters make them so many stables) for horses, which he gives him; and yet his horsemen are no more than twelve thousand; and to (d) the fourteen hundred chariots of war which he informs us he kept, when some of the greatest princes in after-ages had not half that number, and God's general injunction to the king of Israel was, (e) that he 'should not multiply horses to himself?'

These are some of the faults and failings (to give them the softest term we can) of David and his son Solomon, whom the sacred historian endeavours to extol, though it be at the expence of some absurdities and self-contradictions. The most remarkable part of their story is, their concern for the building of the temple at Jerusalem; and yet it is very justly to be questioned, whether in this they deserved any praise, or did God any real service, since (f) "the Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands, as the apostle testifies; for (g) the Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my foot-stool, saith the Lord; where then is my house which ye build for me, or where is the place of my rest?"

ANSWER.

THERE is hardly any one passage in Scripture more difficult to give a satisfactory account of, than this relation of Saul's cruelty to the Gibeonites; because we have little or no intimation, either when, or where, or why their slaughter was committed.

The Gibeonites were not of the children of Israel, but the remains of the Amorites, who, upon Joshua's taking possession of the promised land, imposed upon him and his counsellors, and cunningly drew the Israelites into a league with them, which was instantly confirmed by an oath; and because it was so confirmed, for above three hundred years, was reputed inviolable. But though the Gibeonites, by their craft and fallacy, saved their lives, yet it was upon this condition, that they should (h) "become hewers of wood, and drawers of water for the service of the tabernacle." Now while the tabernacle was at Nob, which was a city of the priests, and where some of the Gibeonites, their attendants, may be supposed to reside, the Sacred History informs us, that Saul, (i) in revenge to the priests whom he took to be favourers of David's cause, destroyed the city, and massacred all the inhabitants thereof; so that several of the Gibeonites must have been slain upon this occasion, and for the shedding of their blood this famine was sent. This is the account which some learned men give us of the matter: But they never considered, (k) that as Saul's sin in murdering the priests was greater than in slaying the Gibeonites, God should have inflicted this severe punishment upon the land for the greater sin rather than the less. It has been said indeed, that for the slaughter of the priests, God had avenged himself on Saul before, by suffering him and his sons to be

(a) 1 Kings ii. 27.
and 2 Chron. ix. 25.
(h) Josh. ix. 23.

(b) Ibid. iii. 4.
(e) Deut. xvii. 16.
(i) 1 Sam. xxii. 17.

(c) Patrick in locum.
(f) Acts vii. 48.
(k) Le Clerc's Commentary on 2 Sam. xxi. 1.

(d) Vid. 1 Kings iv. 26.
(g) Isaiah lxvi. 1.

slain in battle by the Philistines, but that the slaughter of the Gibeonites was not as yet expiated; yet it will be difficult to conceive, why there should be two different and distinct punishments for one and the same sin, committed at the self-same time

From 2 Sam.
xix. to 1 Kings
viii.

When, or by whom, or on what occasion, the tabernacle and altar of burnt-offerings, which were made by Moses in the wilderness, were removed from Nob to Gibeon, we cannot tell, because the Scripture is silent: But it is the conjecture of (a) some learned men, that it was not long after the murder of the priests at Nob; and that Saul, very probably, to regain the favour of the people, which he found he had lost by being so barbarous to men of their sacred character, quarrelled with the Gibeonites, and banished them out of their city, in order to make room for the tabernacle of the Lord.

The Scripture indeed acquaints us, that (b) "he sought to slay the Gibeonites in his zeal to the children of Israel and Judah;" where the expression seems to denote, (c) that the children of Israel envied these miserable people, insomuch that Saul thought he could not do a more popular act than to cut them off.

But by the children of Israel, (d) some rather understand the tribe of Benjamin in particular, viz. that very tribe from whence king Saul descended; and thence they infer, that his zeal, or earnest desire to promote his own tribe to riches and grandeur, made him seek occasion to fall foul upon the Gibeonites, in order that the three cities which they possessed in the territories of Benjamin might fall into his hands, and so be divided among his own family. That he either had, or intended to advance and enrich his own tribe, is manifest from these words of his: (e) "Hear now, ye Benjamites, will the son of Jesse give every one of you fields and vineyards, and make you all captains of thousands, and captains of hundreds?" i. e. will he do for you as I have, and mean to do? Now, if we look into the actions of Saul, we do not find that he made any purchase of the possessions of another tribe, or that he took from his enemies any considerable territories, in order to accommodate his Benjamites; and are therefore left to suppose, that the fields and vineyards wherewith he enriched them, he unjustly acquired by destroying and dispossessing the Gibeonites. It is but supposing, then, that some of the chief of these Gibeonites had, in some instance or other, offended Saul, for which he was minded to destroy the whole race; or that he had cast a greedy eye upon their lands and possessions, which, in case of their excision, would be forfeited to the crown, and so might be given to his own family; and then he had allegations plausible enough against them, pretending, "That it was not for the honour or interest of God's people to nourish any of that viperous brood in their bosoms; and that however Joshua and the princes, who then bore sway, had by their fraud been drawn into an oath to preserve them, yet, in truth, that oath was contrary to God's command, which required them (f) 'to smite them, and utterly destroy them;' and therefore ought not, as he thought, to be observed."

Thus Saul might set up for a restorer of the Divine laws to their ancient rigour and strictness of execution, and a supplier of the default of Joshua, and the princes of Israel, in sparing the Gibeonites, even though they were comprised in the general ordinance of extirpation; and, under this character, he might easily draw in his own subjects to abet and assist his cruelty against a poor people, for whom they had never any good liking. *Regis ad exemplum* is the known maxim; and therefore, we may easily suppose, that a wicked and hard-hearted people, who had assisted Saul in the persecution of David, had adhered to Absalom in his rebellion against his own father; and who, at the beck of so many impious princes, left the true worship of God, and fell into idolatry, would not be backward to assist Saul in putting in execution any of his contrivances against the poor Gibeonites. And if so, we cannot but admire the wis-

(a) *Calmet's Commentary* on 1 Sam. xxii. 19.
(d) *The History of the Life of King David*, vol. iii.

(b) 2 Sam. xxi. 2.
(e) 2 Sam. xxii. 7.

(c) *Le Clerc* in locum.
(f) Deut. vii. 2.

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dom and justice of God, in making the punishment national, when the whole nation (for aught we know) was confederate with Saul in murdering the Gibeonites, or guilty at least in not hindering it; when the next generation was involved in the guilt, by not repairing the injury as much as possible, or not expressing their horror and detestation of it by some public act; when an act of discipline might, at this time, be necessary, to preserve the remaining Gibeonites from insults, to beget in the Israelites a proper respect for them, to prevent the like murders for the future, and the like breaches of national compacts.

Nay, supposing the people, who lived in that time when the famine prevailed, to be never so innocent of the blood of the Gibeonites, yet it cannot be denied, but that God, who is the author and giver of life, has an absolute right over the lives of all, and can recal that gift whenever he pleases: And (a) therefore, if in the case before us he made a demand (as certainly he had a right to do it) of so many lives, at such a time, and in such a manner, as might best answer the ends of discipline; then, that which was just in other views, and without any such special reason, could not become unjust by having that additional reason to recommend it. In a word, if the thing was righteous, considered merely as an act of dominion in God, it could not but be both righteous and kind, by being made, at the same time, an act of discipline for the punishment of sin and perfidy, and the promotion of justice and godliness among men.

We must all allow, that God, as he is a most just and righteous Being, can never require that the innocent should die for the guilty; and therefore we have reason to believe, that, when Saul (for reasons above-mentioned) was so outrageous against the Gibeonites, his sons and grandsons might be the instruments of his cruelty, and very probably bear some part in the military execution. For it frequently so happens, that whatever a king commands, be it never so abominable, is generally approved and executed by his family; and therefore, (b) when we are told from the mouth of God, that the plague sent upon the people was "for Saul and his bloody house, because † he slew the Gibeonites;" it seems to be evident, that it was for their guilt as well as his; nor can we imagine, that this guilt of theirs could be any thing less than that of being the executioners in this slaughter. It is plain, that they were his "captains of thousands, and captains of hundreds;" and it is as plain, that, as such, they must be the instruments of his cruelty; for if they were not, why are they called bloody. They refused, indeed, (c) to slaughter the priests at his command, but there is no reason to believe that they were so scrupulous in regard to the Gibeonites; and if they were not, is there less equity in God's destroying their sons for the sins of their fathers, which they adopted and shared in, than there was in his destroying Jehoram, the son of Ahab, for that vineyard which the father had cruelly and unjustly acquired, and son as unjustly detained?

Without calling, then, to our assistance God's great prerogative, (d) "of visiting the sins of the father upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation," we may fairly say, that, if these descendants of Saul did either concur in this murder of the Gibeonites when doing, or avow and defend it when done, they became culpable upon their own, as well as their ancestors account, and thereupon justly deserved to be delivered up to the resentment of a people that had suffered so much by their inhumanity.

Upon this supposition, then, (for it is by suppositions that we must go in this obscure part of history) that both the people and the princes of the blood were accessary, or instrumental to Saul's cruelty, the reason why God delayed their punishment so long is obvious; even because his infinite goodness waited for their repentance; which goodness we badly requite, if we pervert it as an argument against his Providence. For may not

(a) *Scripture Vindicated*, part ii.

(b) *The History of the Life of King David*, vol. iii.

† The words which we render *he slew*, might as properly be rendered *they slew*.

(c) 1 Sam. xxii. 17.

(d) Exod. xx. 5.

God be gracious and merciful as long as he pleases? Or have we any right to set bounds to his patience and long-suffering? It is but supposing, then, that while God continued in this state of expectance, upon some special occasion or other, to us unknown, both the people of Israel and Saul's posterity might discover, that they were so far from repenting, that they gloried in the murder of the Gibeonites; and this would determine God, who had hitherto waited for their penitence in vain, to pour out his indignation upon them, and exact a severe punishment both for their cruelty and obstinacy.

Whether the Gibeonites did right or wrong, in exacting so severe a retaliation, as that of hanging up seven of Saul's progeny, for the injury that he and his family had done them, the Sacred History is no ways concerned. It relates the transaction just as it happened; but to shew us from whence this barbarous custom of hanging up men to appease the anger of the gods did proceed, it prefaces the account of the matter with this observation:—(a) "These Gibeonites were not of the children of Israel (for among them they learnt no such practice), but a remnant of the Amorites," who were addicted to this horrid superstition, of which the Gibeonites (notwithstanding their abode among people of better sentiments) still retained some tincture, and propounded it to David, as an expedient to make the earth become fruitful again; (b) "Let seven of Saul's sons be given unto us, and we will hang them up unto the Lord."

The Scripture, you see, speaks in the dialect of these people; but from thence we make a wrong conclusion, if we think, that God can be delighted with human sacrifices, which so frequently and so vehemently we find him declaiming against, and professing his utter detestation of. He desires the death or punishment of no man, except it be in pursuance of the ends of his wise Providence, or when the criminal, by his bad conduct, has forfeited his life to the government he lives under; nor would he have required the execution of any of Saul's posterity, had it not been to procure the poor distressed Gibeonites (who were true drudges to their Hebrew masters) a kinder treatment, and better quarter for the future; had it not been to testify his abhorrence of all oppression and violence; to shew, that the cries of the meanest slave, as well as of the mightiest monarch, enter the ears of the Most High; that with him there is no respect of persons, but "the rich and the poor to him are both alike:" (c) Had it not been to repair the injury done to his most holy name, in the violation of the compact, which both Joshua and the princes of Israel made with this people, and confirmed with the solemnity of an oath: Had it not been by this exemplary punishment, to give mankind a lesson of instruction concerning the sacredness of oaths and treaties, and how religiously they ought to be observed, even towards those that are in the lowest state and circumstances of life.

Under these considerations only could the death of Saul's sons be acceptable to God; and how far David, in like manner, came to be concerned in it, we shall now proceed to consider.

Both the Septuagint and vulgar Latin translation make the demand of the Gibeonites, when David sent to offer them satisfaction, run in this strain:—(d) "The man who consumed us and oppressed us unjustly, we ought utterly to destroy, so as not to leave one of his race remaining in any of the coasts of Israel:" and in this demand, we may presume, that they persisted, until David, partly by his authority, and partly by kind entreaties, prevailed with them to be content with seven only. Here then was a fair opportunity for David (had he been so minded) to have cut off the whole race of Saul as it were at one blow, and to have avoided all the odium of the action, by but barely saying, "That the Gibeonites demanded all, and his instructions from God were, to grant whatever they demanded." But instead of that, we find him, before this happened,

(a) 2 Sam. xxi. 2.

(d) 2 Sam. xxi. 5.

(b) Ibid. ver. 6.

(c) Calmet's Commentary in locum.

From 2 Sam.
xix. to 1 Kings
viii.

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making enquiry for such (a) "as were left of Saul's family, that he might shew kindness to them for Jonathan's sake;" interposing his good offices here with the Gibeonites, to have them abate the keenness of their resentment, and make the slaughter of Saul's devoted house as moderate as possible; and, after that slaughter was over, (b) giving them a public and solemn interment, "with the bones of Saul and Jonathan his son," in the sepulchre of their ancestors, and himself attending them in person to the grave.

The death of Saul's posterity, procured by the Gibeonites, had it not proceeded from God's positive command, but been only a "plausible pretence for David to get rid of his rivals in empire," (c) we cannot imagine why he should slay no more than seven of these descendants; why he should cut off only collateral branches, and spare all those who were in a direct line of succession to the throne; why he spared Ishbosheth, his competitor for the kingdom, whom, by Abner's means, he might have dispatched, and, according to their desert, punished the two traitors who had officiously murdered him; and why he spared Mephibosheth the son of Jonathan, and Micah his son, and Micah's four sons, (whom in all probability he lived to see) and in them (d) a long generation, all descended from Saul's family, and all related to the crown.

Had this affair of the Gibeonites happened indeed about the beginning of David's reign over all Israel, soon after the death of Ishbosheth, and when he had reason to apprehend that some other rival might perchance spring up in his stead; there might then be some umbrage to think, that the branches of Saul's family were to be cut off for reasons of state, and to make his possession of the crown more safe: but since these things came to pass very near the conclusion of his reign, when (as he himself acknowledges (e) in the very next chapter) God had not only "covered him with the shield of his salvation, and so enlarged his steps under him, that his feet could not slip, but given him likewise the necks of his enemies, and made him the head over many strange nations;" he could have no just conception of danger from any quarter, and consequently no necessity to establish his throne by blood.

It could not be then for any private end that David delivered these children of Saul into the hands of the Gibeonites, but purely in obedience to the will of God, who had both directed and warranted him so to do. For we cannot but suppose, (as Josephus does) that when David consulted the oracle concerning the famine, God informed him not only for what crime it was inflicted, but by what means likewise it was to be removed; and therefore, being let into all this, he was not at liberty to do what he pleased, but compelled rather to give up the children as so many victims, notwithstanding his promise and oath to their father, because a superior power interposed, and in so doing cancelled the prior obligation.

His making a grant of Mephibosheth's estate to a vile miscreant of a servant, without giving his master a fair hearing, is another exception that is commonly made to the justice of king David's proceedings in this period of time. But how could David have leisure to send for Mephibosheth from Mount Olivet to Jerusalem, and enquire into the merits of the cause depending between him and his servant, when he was in so great an hurry, and under flight from the arms of his rebel son? Or how could he suppose that Ziba could have dared to have told him so notorious a lie, when it might, in a short time, be disproved? Every circumstance, in short, on Ziba's side looked well, but none on his master's. To his master, David had been extremely kind in restoring to him the forfeited estate of his grand-father Saul, and in allowing him (f) "to eat at his own table, as one of the king's sons; and now, at the general rendezvous of his friends, David might well have expected that the person to whom he had extended so

(a) 2 Sam. ix. 1. (b) Ibid. xxi. 12. 13. (c) *The History of the Life of King David*, vol. iii.
(d) Vid. 1 Chron. viii. 33, &c. (e) 2 Sam. xxii. 36, &c. (f) 2 Sam. ix. 11.

many favours, should not have been so negligent of his duty as to absent himself, unless it had been upon some extraordinary business; and therefore, when Ziba acquaints him with the occasion of his absence, though it was a mere fiction, yet with David it might find a readier credence, because at this time he had reason to mistrust every body, and seeing his own family disconcerted and broken, might think the crown liable to fall to any new claimant that could pretend to the same right of succession that Mephibosheth might.

From 2 Sam.
xix. to 1 Kings
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On the contrary, every thing appeared bright and plausible on Ziba's side. He, though but a servant, came to join the king, and instead of adhering to his master's pretended schemes of advancement, had expressed his duty to his rightful sovereign, in bringing him a considerable present, enough to engage his good opinion. The story that he told of his master likewise, though utterly false, was cunningly contrived, and fitly accommodated to the nature of the times: so that in this situation of affairs, as wise a man as David might have been induced to believe the whole to be true, and, upon the presumption of it being so, might have proceeded to pass a judgment of forfeiture (as in most eastern countries every crime against the state was always attended with such a forfeiture) upon Mephibosheth's estate, and to consign the possession of it to another.

All therefore that David can be blamed for in this whole transaction is an error in judgment, even when he was imposed upon by the plausible tale of a sycophant, and had no opportunity of coming at the truth; but upon his return to Jerusalem, when Mephibosheth appears before him, and pleads his own cause, we find this the decision of it:—(a) “Why speakest thou any more of thy matters? I have said, thou and Ziba divide the land:” which words must not be so understood as if he appointed at that time an equal division of the estate between Mephibosheth and his servant, (for where would the justice of such a sentence be?) but rather that he revoked the order he had given to Ziba, upon the supposed forfeiture of his master, and put things now upon the same establishment they were at first. (b) “I have said,” i. e. “My first grant shall stand when I decreed that Mephibosheth should be lord of the whole estate, and Ziba his steward to manage it for him.”

The words of the grant are these:—(c) “Then the king called to Ziba, Saul's servant, and said unto him, I have given unto thy master's son all that pertained to Saul and to all his house. Thou, therefore, and thy sons, and thy servants, shall till the land for him, and thou shalt bring in the fruits, that thy master's son may have food to eat,” i. e. may be enabled to maintain himself and family in plenty; “but Mephibosheth, thy master's son, shall eat bread alway at my table.” From whence it seems manifest, that this Ziba had been an old steward in Saul's family, and had managed his private estate, which lay at Gibeah of Benjamin. (d) This estate, upon one account or other, had come into David's possession, either in right of his wife, upon the death of Saul's son, or by forfeiture to the crown upon Ishbosheth's rebellion; but he being willing now to do a generous act to Saul's family, in memory of his friendship to Jonathan, passed a free grant or dedition of it to his son, and (that he might make a provision for all his dependants at once) put Ziba into the same place he had enjoyed before, constituting him † steward of the royal manor of Gibeah, even as he had been in the life of Saul. So that David's sentence or determination, (e) “thou and Ziba divide the land,” refers us

(a) 2 Sam. xix. 29.

(b) *Selden*, de Successionibus 25.

(c) 2 Sam. ix. 10. 11.

(d) *Pool's* Annotations in locum.

† The ancient way of tenancy (nor is it yet quite disused) was that of occupying the land, and giving the proprietor a certain annual portion of the fruits

of it. When the tenant paid one-half of the annual produce, he was called *Colonus Partiaris*; and such, in the judgment of the best critics, was Ziba to Mephibosheth, as he had been before to Saul. *The History of the Life of King David*, vol. iii.

(e) 2 Sam. xix. 29. 30.

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to this original grant, and consequently implies no more than that all things should be in the same situation they were in before, viz. that Ziba and his sons should manage the estate, and support themselves out of it as usual, and that the remainder of the profits which accrued from thence, they should bring to Mephibosheth for him to dispose of as he pleased; and to this sense of the words the following reply seems to be accommodated.—“yea, let him have all,” viz. to his own use and property, “since my lord the king is come again in peace*.”

That which leads many into a misconception of David, as if he left the world in a vindictive and unforgiving temper, (because we find him giving his son some instructions concerning two persons who had grossly misbehaved towards him) has been nothing else but the want of distinguishing between the same person, when acting or advising in a public, and when in a private capacity. Shimei curses David in the time of his troubles; and yet David forgives him, and promises he shall not die. Joab does many valourous and brave acts for the honour of his king, and the enlargement of his dominions, but then he sullies all with his insolent behaviour, and barbarous murders. They both had committed crimes enough to forfeit their lives; David, however, for reasons of state, thought it not advisable to seize either of them for the present, but directed his son, if ever they should give him a sufficient provocation, not to spare them. “Thou hast Shimei with thee, (a) and some share perhaps he may have in thy favour; but trust him not, he is no friend to kings or kingly power. Remember what he did to me in my distress; how bitterly, how virulently he cursed me to my face; and I make no doubt but that he would be the same to thee in the like circumstances. I forgave him in my exile, because I looked upon him as an instrument in God’s hands to humble me for my great offence. I forgave him in my return home, because he came to me when my heart was open, and unwilling to damp the joy of my restoration with the effusion of any blood. I promised him his life; and let not that promise be violated in my days: But what I did is no rule or obligation to thee. Let him not die however for his offence against me, but rather watch his conduct, and if he should chance to give thee a fresh occasion, be sure to lay hold of it, because it is not in his nature to be a good subject.

Thou rememberest likewise what Joab did unto me; with what insolence he treated me in the time of the war against Absalom; how, contrary to my orders, he slew him, and afterwards talked to me in a menacing and imperious manner. Thou rememberest what he did to Amasa, whom I intended to have put in his place, and made the general of all my forces; and what to Abner, who was then endeavouring to gain over to my party all that adhered to the house of Saul. The injury done to these two brave men redounds upon me, since they were both under my protection, and both murdered, basely murdered, because I had an esteem for them; and till justice be done to their murderer, (which I in my life-time had not power to do) (b) ‘their innocent blood will not depart from my house.’ Do thou therefore take care to assoil it; and whenever he commits any transgression against thee, let the blood of these two valuable men be charged to his account, and let him, as he has long deserved, be put to death.”

This is the sense of David’s words to his son concerning these two men; and it is easy to observe, that in these dying instructions of his, (c) he is not to be considered as

* [This is a fair and able defence of the conduct of David towards Mephibosheth and Ziba, as far as that conduct can be defended; but we are not bound to approve of every thing which David did, either in his public or private capacity. Ziba had been guilty of the basest treachery, and certainly deserved to be severely punished; but at that period the unsettled state of the kingdom rendered it perhaps impossible

to punish him according to his deserts; though I cannot help thinking that he might have been at least deprived of his stewardship over the lands of Mephibosheth.]

(a) *Patrick’s Commentary* on 2 Kings ii. 8.

(b) 1 Kings ii. 31.

(c) *Scripture vindicated*, part ii. p. 106.

a private man, acting upon principles of resentment, but as a king and governor, giving advice to his son and successor in affairs of state. It was for the public good that such offenders as Shimei and Joab should suffer at a proper time, and as prudence should direct: And therefore, since his promise and oath to one of them, and the formidable power and interest which the other had usurped, restrained him, in his life-time, from punishing them as they deserved; and since it would have been an unjust thing in itself, and a derogation to the glory of his reign, to suffer such public and crying sins to go unpunished; he recommended the consideration of these things to his son, and, (a) like a wise magistrate, laid a scheme for the punishment of wickedness, without regard to any private revenge.

David, as we said, durst not call Joab to an account, because his power and interest was so great in the army, (and it was the army that David, in a great measure, depended on) that it might have occasioned an alteration in the government, had he pretended to do it; but when Solomon came to the throne, Joab was not that mighty man he had formerly been. He was at least of an equal age with David; had commanded the armies of Israel for twenty years and upwards; and as he was only formidable at the head of his troops, and in the times of war and public disorder; so (b) the profound peace which had subsisted for some time, both before and after the beginning of Solomon's reign, had impaired his power, and made him in a manner useless. Upon this account, Solomon had not the like reason to fear him that his father had; nor did he lie under the like obligations to spare him. He had done David great services indeed, and a sufficient recompence it was, that he had been indulged for so many years with an impunity for his crimes; but, whatever the father might be, the son was under no ties or obligations, especially when he found him conspiring to take away his kingdom, and translate it to another.

Wherein the formality of David's sin in numbering the people (which, at first view, seems not to be so very heinous) did consist, it is not so well agreed among interpreters. (c) "When thou takest the number of the children of Israel, says God to Moses, after their number, then shall they give every man a ransom for his soul unto the Lord, that there be no plague among them, when thou numberest them." Upon which passage Josephus, and some others, have founded this conjecture;—That David had quite forgot to demand of every man that was mustered an half shekel, which was appointed by the law, and is here called a ransom for his soul, and therefore God sent among the people a pestilence; because, amidst the great plenty and abundance which they now enjoyed, it was a very impious and provoking thing not to pay him his dues. (d) But where do we find, that upon every numbering of the people an half shekel was ordered to be paid? It was in this case only, when the people were to contribute towards the building of the tabernacle, and God threatens those that should refuse to do it; but this has no manner of relation to what David did, who no where stands charged with such an omission, (e) any more than with a design of raising a capitation-tax (as others conceive) upon every poll through the kingdom.

Others are of opinion, that this numbering of the people was a thing contrary to the fundamental promise which God made Abraham, viz. that his seed should so encrease as even to exceed the stars in multitude; and therefore, since God had promised to increase them beyond number, it savoured of infidelity and distrust in God for any one to go about to number them: But quite contrary to this, the Scripture in another place tells us, that David (out of a religious regard to the promise of God) never intended to take an exact number of all, but of such only as were fit to bear arms; for so the words are, (f) "He took not the number of them, from twenty years old and under, because the Lord had said, he would increase Israel like to the stars of the heavens."

(a) *Calmet's* and *Le Clerc's* Comment. on 1 Kings ii. (b) *Calmet's* Comment. (c) Exod. xxx. 12.

(d) *Calmet's* Commentary in locum.

(e) *Patrick* in locum.

(f) 1 Chron. xxvii. 23, 24.

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The most common therefore, and indeed the only probable opinion is, that this act of David's proceeded (*a*) from pride and ambition, and a foolish curiosity to know the number of his subjects, the strength of his forces, and the extent of his empire: As if all these had greatly contributed to his glory and renown; as if they had been of his own acquiring, and more proper to place his confidence in, than the power and assistance of him whose protection he had so long experienced; whom, upon other occasions, he was wont to call "his rock, his shield, and castle of defence;" and who was able, at all times, to save with a handful of men, as well as with a multitude.

Pride then, and an arrogant conceit of himself, (which is always attended with a forgetfulness of God), was at the bottom of David's numbering the people; and indeed so visible to others, as well as to the all-seeing eye of God, that we find Joab (who was then of his privy council) thus remonstrating against it:—(*b*) "Now the Lord thy God add unto thy people (how many soever they be) an hundred fold, and that the eyes of my Lord the King may see it; but why doth my Lord the king delight in this thing?"

It is a judicious observation of the apostle, (*c*) "Let no man say, when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God cannot tempt with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away with his own lust, and enticed;" and therefore it may justly be reckoned a peculiar elegance in the Hebrew tongue, that it frequently leaves out the nominative noun to a verb active, which, when it happens, the accusative following supplies the place of the nominative that is wanting. This shews that our translators have made a gross mistake in rendering the passage, "the Lord moved David to number Israel and Judah," because in the original there is no such thing as the Lord; for the nominative is omitted, as I said, and the accusative supplying its place makes the sense simply David was moved, (by what is not named, but by his pride and vanity, we may say, as well as (*d*) the instigations of the devil) to number the people. So that there is no contradiction in the Scripture account of this transaction, no appearance of a confederacy between God and Satan; nor was God any farther concerned in it, than as his Providence, for wise ends, thought proper to permit it.

"But if David only was culpable in this affair, why did not God immediately punish him for it, instead of falling upon the people, who were confessedly innocent?"

The generality perhaps were innocent as to the affair of numbering the people; that might be chiefly David's sin; but in other respects they were not. They had many great and grievous sins, which justly deserved punishment, and for which probably they would have been punished before, had it not been for God's tenderness to David, who must have been a sufferer in the common calamity; but now, when both king and people had deserved correction, God was pleased to let loose his anger upon both. David, indeed, was not smitten in person, but a king is never more sensibly punished than when the judgment of God falls upon his people, and diminishes their number and their strength. For the body politic is not unlike the body natural; no sooner does the head suffer, but all the members suffer with it; nor can the least part of the body be in pain, but the head is immediately affected: And therefore we need not doubt, but that David, when he saw (*e*) "the angel stretching out his hand upon Jerusalem to destroy it," and thereupon broke out into this exclamation, "Let thy hand, I pray thee, be against me, and against my father's house," had his heart as full of grief and anxiety as any one that lay languishing in the plague.

Thus, in all the afflictions of his people, David was afflicted: And if this sore judgment befel the nation a little while before Absalom's rebellion (as some have suspected a mis-location in this part of the history), this may suggest a reason why God might

(*a*) *Calmet's Commentary* in locum.
(*d*) 1 Chron. xxi. 1.

(*b*) 2 Sam. xxiv. 3.
(*e*) 2 Sam. xxiv. 16, 17.

(*c*) James i. 13, 14.

think fit to preserve David, and not cut him off, as he deserved, for his sin; (a) that the dissention which might have arisen among his sons, about the right of succession, in case of his death, and the foreign and domestic wars that would thereupon have ensued, and * proved more fatal to the Israelites, than this destroying pestilence, might, by David's life, and interposition, be prevented. And from the sense of this, very probably, it is, that we find him commemorating his deliverance from this public calamity, in such exalted strains, as make it disputable, whether their piety or poetry are more remarkable. (b) "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. He shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler and from the noisome pestilence. Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night, nor for the arrow that flieth by day, nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness, or for the destruction that wasteth at noon-day. A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right-hand, but it shall not come nigh thee."

From 2 Sam.
xix to 1 Kings
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It must be owned indeed, that there is a very large difference, in the Scripture accounts of the number of men, fit to bear arms, that were found in David's dominions: (c) In Samuel it is said, that they were in "Israel eight hundred thousand, and in Judah five hundred thousand; but in (d) Chronicles, they of Israel were a thousand thousand, and an hundred thousand, and they of Judah four hundred threescore and ten thousand:" and various have been the attempts to adjust and settle this disagreement. Some suppose, that, as Joab undertook this office with no small reluctance, and David, very probably, might repent of the thing before it was fully executed, though the commissioners might make an exact review, (e) yet they thought proper to lay before the king no more than what the sum in Samuel amounts to; but that the author of the book of Chronicles might, from some of these commissioners, receive the complete sum which occasioned the difference.

(f) Others imagine that this difference arises from the legionary soldiers (as they are called), or those companies of militia which attended the king's person by turns, and might make the number either greater or less, according as they were numbered or not numbered in the account: But this solution is purely arbitrary, and such as has no foundation in Scripture. It supposes withal, that the real number was what is recorded in Chronicles, which, taken in the several articles that are said to be omitted, surpasses all faith.

Since there is then no possibility of reconciling these different computations, the question is, Which of the two we are to receive? And this, without all controversy, must be that in Samuel, not only because the Arabic translators, in their version of the Chronicles, have inserted it, but because there is nothing excessive or extravagant in the supposition, that in a fertile and well-cultivated country, of sixty leagues in length and thirty in breadth, a multitude of people, to the number of six or seven millions, (which, taking in the other articles, will be the sum total) might very comfortably be maintained. (g) Rather, then, than have recourse to such solutions, as do but more embarrass the matter, we may adventure to say, without any diminution to the Scripture's authority, that the excessive number in the Chronicles was a mistake of the person who, after the captivity, transcribed this part of the Sacred Writ; "Nam non dubito (says Sulpicius (h) in his sacred history) *librariorum potius negligentia, præsertim tot jam sæculis intercedentibus, veritatem fuisse corruptam, quam ut propheta erraverit.*"

It must be acknowledged, that in most nations, where the regal power was at this

(a) *Le Clerc's Commentary* in locum.

* The character, which Livy gives us of such factions and dissentions, is conceived in these words: "Furere, eruntque pluribus populis magis exitio quam bella externa, quam fames, morbi, quæque alia in numinis iras, velut ultima publicorum malorum, vertunt," lib. 4.

(b) *Psal. xci. 1, &c.*

(c) *2 Sam. xxiv. 9.*

(d) *1 Chron. xxi. 5.*

(e) *Ibid xxvii. 24, xxiv. 9.*

(f) *Vide Calmet's Commentary on 2 Samuel*

(g) *Le Clerc's Commentary* in locum.

(h) *Lib. i.*

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time established, the right of succession was generally hereditary, and the eldest son seldom (except in cases of incapacity) postponed. This is what Adonijah urges to Bathsheba; (a) "Thou knowest that the kingdom was mine by right of primogeniture; and that all Israel set their faces on me, that I should reign:" But then, there was this peculiar to the Jewish constitution, that as God had been their only King from the time that they first became a nation, so, when they thought fit to have that form of government altered, he still reserved to himself the right of nominating the successor when the throne became vacant: (b) When thou art come unto the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, and shall say, I will set a king over me, like all the nations that are about me, thou shalt by all means make him king over thee whom the Lord thy God shall choose." So that, when God had declared his pleasure concerning the person that was to succeed him (as he did by the prophet Nathan), David was not at liberty to make choice of any other.

We do not dispute at all, but that Bathsheba, who was his favourite wife, had a great ascendancy over her husband; but Solomon's title was not founded upon her interest and management with the king, but upon the ordination and appointment of God. (c) "Of all my sons, says David, (for the Lord hath given me many sons) he hath chosen Solomon my son to sit upon the throne of the kingdom of the Lord over Israel;" and therefore Adonijah himself acknowledges, (d) "that it was of the Lord that the kingdom was turned about and become his brother's."

Nathan indeed puts Bathsheba upon another argument, viz. the sacredness of the king's oath, in order to prevail with him in behalf of her son; (e) "Didst not thou swear unto thy handmaid, saying, assuredly Solomon thy son shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne?" But at what time this promise was made is a matter of some dispute. The generality of interpreters are of opinion, that after the death of the first child which David had by Bathsheba, he comforted her for her loss, and gave her assurance, that if God should give him another son by her, he would not fail to make him his successor. But it is much more probable, that David did not make any declaration of a promise to Bathsheba, until God had revealed it to him (f) that he should have a son, distinct from what he had already, who should succeed him in the kingdom, and have the honour of building him a temple; and no sooner was Solomon born, but David was convinced that this was the child to whom the promises belonged, by Nathan's being sent to give him a name, denoting his being (g) "beloved of the Lord." And it was at this time, most probably, that David gave his mother a promise, confirmed upon oath, that since God had so manifestly declared in favour of the child, he for his part would do his utmost to facilitate his succession: But, upon the whole, he did not choose for himself, (h) neither was his declaration to Bathsheba previous to Nathan's information, but rather the effect and consequence of it.

But even suppose there had been no Divine interposition in favour of Solomon, why might not David, who had done such signal service in his reign, nominate his successor? (i) Several great princes in most nations have claimed this privilege. Among the Romans, Aurelius named Nerva, and Nerva chose Trajan; and so did Augustus appoint his successor. And that this was a prerogative belonging to the crown of Israel, and what continued with it for some time after David, is evident from the story of his grandson Rehoboam, (k) who, though a prince of no great merit, took upon him the authority of nominating his successor, and, to the prejudice of his eldest son, made one of his youngest king*.

(a) 1 Kings ii. 15.

(b) Deut. xvii. 14, 15.

(h) Calnet's Commentary, in locum.

(c) 1 Chron. xxviii. 5.

(d) 1 Kings ii. 15.

(i) Patrick's Commentary on 1 Kings i. 20.

(e) 1 Kings i. 13. 2 Sam. xii. 24.

(k) 2 Chron. xi. 21, 22.

(f) 1 Chron. xxii. 9, 10.

(g) The name was Jedidiah, 2 Sam. xii. 25.

* [There is really no difficulty whatever in the appointment of Solomon to the throne, if the nature of

Far are we from vindicating Solomon in all his actions, any more than David in the matter of Uriah. His severity to his brother, for a seemingly small offence, looked like revenge, and as if he had taken the first opportunity to cut him off for his former attempt upon the kingdom: And yet we cannot but imagine, (a) from Solomon's words to his mother, "Why doest thou ask Abishag for Adonijah? Ask for him the kingdom also, for he is mine elder brother;" that there was some farther conspiracy against him (though not mentioned in Holy Writ), whereof he had got intelligence, and wherein Joab and Abiathar were engaged; and that he looked upon this asking Abishag in marriage as the prelude to it, and the first overt-act, as it were, of their treason. It is certain, that they thought to impose upon the king, as they had done upon his mother, and carry their point without ever discovering the malevolent intent of it.

From 2 Sam.
xix. to 1 Kings
viii.

The wives of the late king (according to the customs of the east) belonged to his successor, and were never married to any under a crowned head. (b) Abishag was doubtless a beautiful woman, and, by her near relation to David, might have a powerful interest at court; Adonijah might therefore hope, by this marriage, to strengthen his pretensions to the crown, or, at least, to lay the foundation for some future attempt, upon a proper opportunity, either if Solomon should die, and leave a young son not able to contest the point with him, or if, at any time, he should happen to fall under the people's displeasure, as his father had done before him.

This might be Adonijah's design, and Solomon, accordingly, might have information of it: But supposing that his brother's design was entirely innocent, yet, since his request (according to the customs then prevailing) was confessedly bold and presumptuous, and had in it all the appearance of treason, (c) it was none of Solomon's business to make any farther enquiry about it, or to interpret the thing in his brother's favour. It was sufficient for him, that the action was in itself criminal, and of dangerous consequence to the state; for it is by their actions, and not intentions, that all offenders must be tried.

Adonijah, indeed, had he lived under our constitution, would have had a fair hearing before conviction: But we ought to remember, that, in the kingdoms of the East, the government was absolute, and the power of life or death entirely in the prince; so that Solomon, without the formality of any process, could pronounce his brother dead: And because he conceived, that in cases of this nature delays were dangerous, might send immediately, and have him dispatched; though we cannot but say, that it had been more to his commendation had he shewed more clemency, and spared his life.

And in like manner, had he not married his Egyptian queen, there might be less objected to his character: For, whatever augmentation of power he might promise himself from that alliance, (d) he certainly ran the hazard of having his religion corrupted by this unlawful mixture. Others however have observed, that, as the Sacred Scriptures commend the beginning of Solomon's reign, in all other respects, except the (e) "people's sacrificing in high places," which might be the rather tolerated, "because there

the theocracy be considered. Saul and David, though called *kings*, and entrusted with the executive government, were in fact nothing more than *viceroy*s, God himself being still the Supreme civil Sovereign of Israel. Every sovereign has a right to appoint his own *deputy* or *vicegerent*; and it was God and not David who appointed Solomon to be his. This is so very evident from a passage in part quoted by our author, that if he had paid due attention to it, he could not have made his objector find fault with David for *changing the order of succession*!—"The Lord God of Israel (says David) chose me, before all the house of my father, to be king over Israel for ever;

for he hath chosen Judah to be the ruler; and of the house of Judah the house of my father; and among the sons of my father, he liked me to make me king over Israel: And of all my sons (for the Lord hath given me many sons), HE hath chosen Solomon my son, to sit upon the throne (not of my kingdom but) of the kingdom of THE LORD over Israel." 1 Chron. xxviii. 4, 5.]

(a) 1 Kings ii. 22.

(b) *Pool's* Annotations on 1 Kings ii. 22.

(c) *Calmet's* Commentary in locum.

(d) Vid. 1 Kings. xi.

(e) 1 Kings iii. 2.

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was no house built unto the name of the Lord in those days ;” and as they give him this character, (a) that “ he loved the Lord, and walked in all the statutes of David his father,” he would never have done an act so directly contrary to the laws of God, as marrying an idolatrous princess, had she not been first proselyted to the Jewish faith. The Scripture indeed takes notice of the gods of the Moabites, Ammonites, and Zidonians, for whom Solomon, in compliance to his strange wives, built places of worship. But as there is no mention made of any gods of the Egyptians, it seems very likely, that this princess, when she was espoused to Solomon, quitted the religion of her ancestors, to which these words in the psalm, supposed to be written upon this occasion, (b) “ Harken, O my daughter, forget thine own people, and thy father’s house, so shall the king have pleasure in thy beauty, for he is the Lord,” are thought by some to be no distant allusion. However this be, it is certain, that we find Solomon no where reprov’d in Scripture for this match ; (c) nor can we think that his book of Canticles (which is supposed to be his epithalamium) would have found a place in the Sacred Canon, had the spouse, whom it all along celebrates, been at that time an idolatress ; though there is reason to believe, that she afterwards relapsed into her ancient religion, and contributed, as much as any, to the king’s seduction, and the many great disorders that were in the latter part of his reign.

How far the high priest, Abiathar, was concerned in the plot against Solomon, the Sacred History does not particularly inform us ; but such was the reverence paid to the sacerdotal character, that Solomon would have hardly dared to have deposed such an one from his office, had not the constitution of the nation authorized him so to do. The kings in the East, indeed, soon found out ways to make themselves absolute ; but it looks as if, at the first establishment, the king was at the head of the Hebrew republic, and the high priest his subject, and, in all civil affairs, submitted to his correction ; (d) insomuch, that when any one abused the power of his office to the prejudice of the commonweal, or endangering the king’s person, the king might justly deprive him of his honours and titles, of his temporalities and emoluments, and even of life itself. And therefore, when Abiathar, by his conspiracy, had merited all this, whatever was dependant on the crown (as all the revenues of this place, as well as the liberty of officiating in it were dependant), Solomon might lawfully take from him ; but the sacerdotal character, which he received from God, and to which he was anointed, this he could not alienate : And therefore we may observe, that after his deprivation, and even when Zadok was in possession of his place, he is nevertheless still mentioned (e) under the style and title of the priest.

The truth is, there is a great deal of difference between depriving a man of the dignity and of the exercise of his function in such a determinate place, and between taking from him an authority that was given him by God, and the profits and emoluments arising from it, which were originally the gift of the crown *. The former of these Solomon could not do, and the latter, it is probable, he was the rather incited to do, out of regard to the prophecy of Samuel, wherein he foretold Eli, (from whom Abiathar was descended) that he would translate the priesthood from his to another family, as he did in the person of Zadok, who was of the house of Eleazar, even as Eli was of that of Ithamar ; so that by this means the priesthood reverted to its ancient channel.

In the account which we have of Solomon’s sumptuous manner of living, (f) we read

(a) 1 Kings iii. 3.

(b) Psal. xlv. 10. 11.

(c) Calmei’s Comment. on 1 Kings iii. 1.

(d) Ibid. ii. 27.

(e) 1 Kings iv. 4.

* [This would be nonsense, if Solomon had been such a king as modern monarchs, as our author seems to have thought him. The emoluments of the office of high priest among the Israelites were not originally the gift either of the people or of any government

constituted by them. They were the gift of God, the only king of Israel, whose prime minister the high priest was *ex officio* ; and it was as God’s vicegerent that Solomon deprived Abiathar of them, when by his rebellion against God he had forfeited what right he had ever had to the office of high priest.]

(f) 1 Kings iv. 26.

in the book of Kings, that he had "forty thousand stalls of horses for his chariots;" (a) but in that of Chronicles it is said, that he had no more than four; and yet in this some will acknowledge no disagreement at all. The author of the book of Kings, say they, speaks of the horses, the author of the Chronicles of the stalls or stables, which, supposing every one to contain ten horses, answer the number exactly. It is observable, however, that the history makes mention (b) of chariot-cities, i. e. cities, wherein Solomon kept chariots and horsemen in several parts of his kingdom, for the security of his government, and the suppression of any disorder that might happen to arise; and therefore others have thought, that in the Chronicles the author speaks of those stalls which Solomon had at Jerusalem for his constant life-guard, and were no more than four thousand; but in Kings, of all those stalls which were dispersed up and down in the several parts of his kingdom, which might be forty thousand: because, upon the account of the conquests which his father had made on the east side of Jordan, it was necessary for Solomon to have a stronger armament of this kind, than other kings before him had, in order to keep the people, that would otherwise be apt to rebel, in due subjection.

From 2 Sam.
xix. to 1 Kings
viii

But, without any prejudice to the authority of the Scriptures, why may we not own that an error has possibly crept into the text through the negligence of some transcriber, who has inserted *Arbahim*, i. e. *forty*, instead of *Arbah*, *four*, and so made this large disparity in the number? Four thousand stalls (supposing each stall for a single horse) are moderate enough, but forty thousand is incredible; and therefore (to proportion the horses to the chariots, (c) which were a thousand and four hundred) we may suppose, (d) with the learned author, from whom we have borrowed this conjecture, that of these chariots, some were drawn with two, some with three, and some with four horses. Now, if the chariots were each drawn with a pair only, the number of Solomon's chariot horses must be two thousand eight hundred; if by two pair, then it must be five thousand six hundred; but the medium between these two numbers is very near four thousand; and therefore it seems most likely that the horses which the king kept for this use only might be much about this number. Too many for the law to tolerate; (e) but the king perhaps might have as little regard to this clause in the law, as he had to the following one, which forbade him (f) "to multiply wives and concubines to himself, or greatly to multiply silver or gold."

The only remaining difficulty (except the Divine vision vouchsafed Solomon, which has not been mentioned) is the great quantity of sacrifices, which he is said to have offered on one altar only; but, without recurring to any miracle for this, or without supposing that this fire, which originally came from heaven, was more strong and intense than any common fire, and therefore, after the return from the captivity, the altar (as some observe) was made larger, because there wanted this celestial flame; without any forced solution like this, we have no reason to think that all these sacrifices were offered in one day. The king, (we may imagine) upon one of the great festivals, went in procession with his nobles, to pay his devotion at Gibeon, where the tabernacle was, and the brazen altar which Moses had made. Each of the great festivals lasted for seven days; but Solomon might stay much longer at Gibeon, until, by the daily oblations, a thousand burnt-offerings were consumed; and, at the conclusion of this course of devotion, he might offer up his ardent prayer to God for wisdom; and God, for the confirmation of his faith, might appear to him in a dream by night, and have that converse with him which the Scripture takes notice of.

(g) Sleep indeed is like a state of death to the soul, wherein the senses are locked

(a) 2 Chron. ix. 25.

(b) Ibid.

(c) 1 Kings x. 26.

(d) Vid. Bochart

Hieros. p. i. lib. ii. c. 9.

(e) Deut. xvii. 16.

(f) Le Clerc's Commentary on 1 Kings iv. 26.

(g) Calmet's Commentary on 1 Kings iii.

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up, and the understanding and will deprived of the free exercise of their functions ; and yet this is no impediment to God in communicating himself to mankind ; for (a) “ God speaketh once, yea twice ” (says the author of the book of Job) “ in a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed, then he openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction ; ” for God, no doubt, has power, not only to awaken our intellectual faculties, but to advance them above their ordinary measure of perception, even while the body is asleep.

(b) A very eminent father of the Greek church, speaking of the different kinds of dreams, has justly observed, that the organs of our body and our brain are not unlike the strings of a musical instrument. While the strings are screwed up to a proper pitch, they give an harmonious sound, if touched by a skilful hand ; but as soon as they are relaxed they give none at all. In like manner, while we are awake, (says he) our senses, touched and directed by our understanding, make an agreeable concert ; but when once we are asleep, the instrument has done sounding, unless it be, that the remembrance of what passed, when we are awake, comes and presents itself to the mind, and so forms a dream, just as the strings of an instrument will for some time continue their sound, even after the hand of the artist has left them. It is no hard matter to apply this to Solomon’s dream. He had prayed the day before with great fervency, and desired of God the gift of wisdom. In the night time God appeared to him in a dream, and bid him ask whatever he would. Solomon, having his mind still full of the desire of wisdom, asked it, and obtained it : so that the prayer or desire which he uttered in his dream, was but the consequence of the option he had made the day before when he was awake.

In a word, though we should allow that the soul of man, when the body is asleep, is in a state of rest and inactivity, yet we cannot but think that God can approach it many different ways ; can move and actuate it, just as he pleases ; and when he is minded to make a discovery of any thing, can set such a lively representation of it before the eyes of the man’s understanding, as shall make him not doubt of the reality of the vision.

Solomon indeed, at the consecration of the temple, owns, that (c) “ the heaven of heavens could not contain God, and much less then the house that he had built him ; ” but it will not therefore follow that there is no necessity for places appropriated to Divine worship, nor any occasion for making them so magnificent and sumptuous. That God, who is the author and giver of our being, and to whom we are indebted for every thing we have, and every thing we hope for, should be constantly attended with the homage and adoration, with the praises and acknowledgments of his creatures, (his own dependent creatures) is a position that will admit of no controversy ; and that there should be some places appointed for this purpose, that all the offices of religion may be performed with more decency and more solemnity, is another position that seems to arise from the nature of the thing. These buildings we style the houses of God ; but it is not to defend him (as Arnobius (d) speaks) from heat or cold, from wind, or rain, or tempests, that we raise such structures, but to put ourselves in a capacity of paying our duty to him, and of nourishing in our hearts such sentiments of respect and reverence, of love and gratitude, as are due from creatures to their great Creator.

In these places God is said to be more immediately present, to hear our supplications, receive our praises, and relieve our wants ; and therefore, to make his habitation commodious, David exhorts his subjects to a liberal contribution, and “ Because I have a joy, says he, in the house of my God, I have, of mine own gold and silver, given three thousand talents of gold, even the gold of Ophir, and seven thousand talents of fine

(a) Job xxxiii. 14, &c.
(d) *Contra Gent.* lib. vi.

(b) Gregory, *de Opificio Hominis*, c. 13.

(c) 1 Kings viii. 27.

silver." "He indeed makes mention (the learned (a) Hooker, with whose words I conclude this argument, has observed) of the natural conveniency, that such kind of bounteous expences have, since thereby we not only testify our cheerful affection to God, which thinks nothing too dear to be bestowed about the furniture of his service; but give testimony to the world likewise of his Almightyness, whom we outwardly honour with the chiefest of outward things, as being, of all things, himself incomparably the greatest. To set forth the majesty of kings, his vicegerents here below, the most gorgeous and rare treasures that the world can afford are procured; and can we suppose that God will be pleased to accept what the meanest of these would disdain? In a word, though the true worship of God, says he, be to God in itself acceptable, who respects not so much in what place, as with what affection he is served; yet manifest it is, that the very majesty and holiness of the place where God is worshipped, hath, in regard of us, great virtue, force and efficacy, as it is a sensible help to stir up devotion, and, in that respect, bettereth no doubt our holiest and best actions of that kind."

From 2 Sam.
xix. to 1 King
viii.

DISSERTATION V.

OF THE ANCIENT JERUSALEM AND ITS TEMPLE.

IT is an opinion vulgarly received, and not without much probability, that Jerusalem is the same city which (b) elsewhere is called Salem, and whereof Melchisedek is said to have been king. Not that Salem, or the city of Melchisedek, was of equal extent with Jerusalem in after-times; but Jerusalem was no other than the city of Salem enlarged and beautified by the kings of all Israel, at first by David and Solomon, and after that by the succeeding kings of Judah, when the monarchy came to be divided into two distinct kingdoms.

The word *Salem*, in the Hebrew language, (c) signifies *peace*: And as the city of Melchisedek, called Salem, is probably thought to be the same with Jerusalem; so it is certain, that Jerusalem was (d) otherwise called Jebus, and therefore, as it preserves the name of Salem in the latter, so it is thought to preserve the name of Jebus in the former part of it, and to be nothing else but a compound of Jebus and Salem, which, for the better sound's sake, by the change of one letter and the omission of another, is softened into Jerusalem.

Whether this city stood in the centre of the world or no, we shall not pretend to determine, though some † very zealously contend for it; since it is a matter of more ma-

(a) *Eccles. Polity*, lib. v. § 15, 16.

(b) Gen. xiv. 18. (c) Heb. vii. 2.

(d) Compare Josh. xv. 8. with 1 Chron. xi. 4.

† To this purpose they observe, that the sacred writers are very well acquainted with this, as appears by that passage of Ezekiel, chap. v. 5. "Thus saith the Lord God, this is Jerusalem; I have set it in the midst of the nations and countries round about her." For what purpose he did this the Psalmist has not been wanting to inform us, "Out of Sion, says he, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined," Psal. l. 2. Here the Almighty kept his court, and from hence

he sent out his ambassadors, the prophets, to publish his decrees to the whole world around him, with more ease, and speedier conveyance, than could possibly be done from any other region of the habitable world. From hence, as from a central point, the light of the law at first, and the gospel afterwards, shone out to the surrounding nations; and therefore we find Jerusalem emphatically called "the city of our God, the mountain of his holiness, beautiful for situation, and the joy of the whole earth," Psalm xlviii. 1, 2. *The History of the Life of King David*, vol. ii.

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terial disquisition in what tribe it may be supposed to have been situated. In the conquest of the land of Canaan, and at the famous battle of Gibeon, (a) Joshua put to death the king of Jerusalem, and very probably took the city, though, by some means or other not mentioned in Scripture, the Jebusites afterwards got possession, and continued their possession even till the days of David. In the division of the land, it was apparently one of those cities which (b) were given to the tribe of Benjamin; and yet, when we read that, at one time, (c) "the children of Judah could not drive out the Jebusites," and at another, (d) "that the children of Judah took and burnt Jerusalem," one would be tempted to think that it lay within the limits of that tribe: But then this difference may be easily reconciled, if we will but consider, that as this city was built on the frontiers of both tribes, it is sometimes made a part of the one and sometimes of the other; that by Joshua's division of the country, Benjamin had most right to it, but by the right of conquest, Judah; however, when it came to be made the metropolis of the whole nation, it was thought to belong to the Israelites in common, and therefore was claimed by neither.

The city of Jerusalem was built upon two hills, and encompassed all round with mountains. It was situated in a barren and stony soil; but the places adjacent were well watered, having the fountains of Gihon and Siloam, and the brook Kidron at the foot of its walls. Jebus, or the ancient city which David took, was seated on a hill towards the south; and, on the opposite quarter, towards the north, was Mount Sion, where David built a new † city, and called it after his own name, and where stood his royal palace likewise †², and the temple of the Lord; for the temple was built upon Mount Moriah, which was one of the hills belonging to Mount Sion.

Between these two mountains lay the valley of Millo, which formerly separated ancient Jebus from the city of David, but was afterwards filled up by David and Solomon, to make a communication between the two cities: But besides this valley of Millo, we read in Scripture of (e) the house of Millo, which is said to be (f) in the city of David, and therefore was built either on Mount Sion, or some adjacent place. Let us then enquire a little what this house of Millo might possibly be.

Millo, considered in its etymology, is thought to be deduced from a root, which signifies to be full, and is therefore, in the Sacred History, supposed to denote a large capacious place, designed for public meetings, or, in short, a senate house. That this was some public edifice, I think may be inferred from the notice that is taken of it

(a) Josh. x. 29. 40. and xii. 10.

(b) Josh. xviii. 28.

(c) Josh. xv. 63.

(d) Judg. i. 8.

† This city was of a circular form, situate on a much higher hill, and surrounded with a broad deep trench, hewn (whether by art or nature) out of a natural rock. This trench was defended by a wall of great strength, erected upon its inner edge, and this wall was, in like manner, defended and beautified with strong and square towers, at regular distances; which towers are said to have been built of white marble, the lowest 60, and the highest 120 cubits high, but all exactly of one level on the top, although in themselves of very different heights, according to the declivity of the ground on which they stood, *The History of the Life of King David*, vol. ii.

†² The tower which went under the name of David, was situate upon the utmost angle of mount Sion; and the beauty and fine proportion of this fabric, as well as the use that was made of it, may be fairly inferred from that famous comparison of Solomon's, "Thy neck is like the tower of David, built for an

armoury, whereon there hang a thousand bucklers, all shields of mighty men," Cant. iv. 4. The tower of Furnaces, which probably had its name from the many fires that were lighted up in it at once, answered all the ends of a Pharos, or watch-tower, both to the land and sea. By the advantage of its situation, it could not fail of being an excellent light-house both to the Mediterranean and Red Sea, and was probably so contrived as to illuminate a great part of the city likewise, and in that respect, was not only a glorious ornament, but of excellent use. The house of the mighty was a palace erected by David, in honour of his worthies, or chieftains in war, in which they had apartments according to their reputation and merit in arms, were always ready at hand for counsel or aid, as the king's affairs required, and at leisure hours, by superintending and instructing the youth in their military exercises, answered all the purposes of a royal academy for the science of war. *The History of the Life of King David*, vol. ii.

(e) 2 Kings xii. 20.

(f) 2 Chron. xxxii. 5.

among some other of Solomon's public buildings, where the reason of the tax, which he levied upon his subjects, is said to be this,—(a) “That he might build the house of the Lord, and his own house, and Millo, and the walls of Jerusalem, &c.” for since we find it joined with the house of the “Lord, and the walls of Jerusalem,” we cannot but suppose, that it was a building of the same public nature; and since we find farther, that (b) “the servants of king Joash arose, and made a conspiracy, and slew him in the house of Millo,” very probably when he was come thither to debate, and consult with his princes, and other chief men, the thing seems to be incontestable, that this house of Millo was erected for a public senate house, though there is some reason to imagine that it was employed likewise for other purposes.

From 2 Sam.
xix. to 1 Kings
viii.

In the reign of Hezekiah, when Sennacherib came against Jerusalem with a purpose to besiege it, the king took counsel with his princes, and, among other things that were thought proper for his defence, it is said, (c) “that he built up all the wall that was fallen, and repaired Millo, and made darts and shields in abundance.” From whence we may infer, that this Millo was a place of great consequence to the strength of Jerusalem, and was very probably made to serve two purposes, i. e. to be both a parliament house and an arsenal.

The palace which David built for himself (to which was adjoined that which his son built for the king of Egypt's daughter) must needs have been a very magnificent structure, since he had both his (d) workmen and materials sent him † from Tyre, which, at that time, surpassed all other nations in the art of building: But of this we can give no other account, than that it stood westward from the temple, and consisted of a large square court defended by flankers, from one of which was the descent by stairs into the gardens, which, in all probability, were watered by the fountain of Siloam.

This fountain of Siloam rises just under the walls of Jerusalem, on the east side thereof, between the city and the brook Kidron; and in all probability was the same with the fountain Enrogel, or the Fuller's fountain, whereof we find mention (e) in Joshua, and in the books of Samuel and the Kings. Some travellers will have it, that the water of this fountain is brackish, and has not a good taste; but the prophet Isaiah, when he utters the complaint of God against the Jews, (f) “forasmuch as this people refuseth the waters of Shiloah, which go softly, &c.” seems to denote the contrary. However this be, St Jerom himself affirms, that the waters of this fountain made the valley through which they ran (as watering the gardens and plantations that were there), very pleasant and delightful.

The fountain of Gihon, which springs very probably from an adjacent hill of the same name, was on the west side of Jerusalem; and as the king Hezekiah (g) ordered the upper channel of this fountain to be conveyed into Jerusalem, that when the city was besieged, the enemy might not have the benefit of its waters; so we need not doubt, but (h) that that other spring of Siloam was, in like manner, conveyed into the city, and that for the convenience of its inhabitants, they were both, in several places, distributed (i) into pools; though some make that of Siloam to be without the walls.

The brook Kidron runs in the valley of Jehosaphat, on the east of Jerusalem, between the city and the Mount of Olives. It has usually no great quantity of water in it, and is frequently quite dry; but upon any sudden rains it swells exceedingly, and runs with great impetuosity. It was indeed of singular service to the ancient city, as

(a) 1 Kings ix. 15.

(b) 2 Kings xii. 20.

days of Solomon. *Calmet's Dictionary* under the word.

(c) 2 Chron. xxxii. 5.

(d) 1 Chron. xiv. 1.

(e) Josh. xv. 7. 2. Sam. xvii. 17. and 1 Kings i. 9.

(f) Isaiah viii. 6.

(g) 2 Chron. xxxii. 30.

(h) *Lamy's Introduction*, lib. i. c. 3.

(i) John ix. 7.

† This must be understood of the Old Tyre, which was situate upon the continent, and where the temple of Hercules stood, of whose antiquity Herodotus talks so much; and not of the New Tyre, which stood upon a neighbouring island, but was not built until the

A. M. 2981, it received its common sewers, and, upon every such violent flood, emptied them into the Dead Sea.

&c. or 4375.
Ant. Chris.
1023, &c.
or 1036.

The Mount of Olives, which doubtless had its name from the great quantity of olive trees that grew there, was situated to the east of Jerusalem, and parted from the city only by the valley of Jehosaphat and the brook Kidron; for which reason it is said to be a Sabbath-day's journey, i. e. about a mile from it. It was on this mountain that Solomon built temples to the gods of the Ammonites and of the Moabites, in complaisance to his wives, who were natives of these nations; and for this reason it is likewise called in Scripture (a) the Mount of Corruption, because such as follow vain idols are frequently said in Scripture to corrupt themselves. (b) Some indeed have imagined, that this mount of corruption was a distinct place; but the matter of fact is, that Mount Olivet had three summits, or was made up of three several mountains, ranged one after another from north to south. The middle summit was that from which our Lord ascended; towards the south was that whereon Solomon (c) set up his abominations; and towards the north was the highest of all, (d) which was commonly called Galilee.

Mount Calvary, which, in all appearance, had its name * from the similitude it bore to the figure of a skull or man's head, was to the west of the ancient Jerusalem, just without the gates: And, as our Saviour suffered there, we may presume it was the common place where criminals of all kinds were generally executed.

The valley of Hinnon, or of the sons of Hinnon, lay to the south of the city, and was remarkable for the cruel and barbarous worship of Moloch, where parents made their children pass through the fire, or be burnt in the fire, by way of sacrifice to that idol; and where it was usual to have musical instruments (from whence it obtained likewise the name of Tophet, the Hebrew word *Toph* signifying the same as *Tympanum* in Latin, and *Timbrel* in English) to drown the lamentable shrieks of the children thus sacrificed. In this place there was afterwards kept a perpetual fire, to consume the dead carcasses and excrements which were brought from Jerusalem; and therefore our Saviour, alluding to this, calls hell by the name of Ge-henna, or the valley of Hinnon.

The valley of Jehosaphat, which is likewise called the valley of Kidron, because of the above mentioned brook which runs through it, lies on the east of Jerusalem, between the city and the Mount of Olives. Our Saviour indeed ascended from this Mount; but the notion is very extravagant, that, when he returns again, he will judge the world in this valley, merely because the prophet Joel hath said, (e) "I will gather all nations, and will bring them into the valley of Jehosaphat, and will plead with them for my people;" for what is there called the valley of Jehosaphat, is not a proper, but an appellative name, and denotes no more than the judgment of God.

There is another valley that the Scripture makes early mention of, and that is (f) the valley of Shaveh, which is likewise called the King's Dale, where Melchisedek met Abraham in his return from the slaughter of Chederlaomer. According to Josephus, it was, in his time, but about two furlongs distant from Jerusalem; and for this reason, perhaps, it has been thought by some to be no other than the valley of Jehosaphat;

(a) 2 Kings xxiii. 13.

(b) Wells's Geography of the Old Testament.

(c) 2 Kings xxiii. 13.

(d) Vid. Reland's Palæst.

* Some formerly have been of opinion, that this mount was called Calvary, because the head of the first man in the world was buried there, and that our Saviour was crucified in the same place; that his blood, running down upon the body of this person, might restore him to life, and procure him the favour of a resurrection. To support this tradition, they tell us, that Noah, having preserved Adam's body in the

ark, distributed the several parts of it to his children, and, as a particular favour, gave the skull, or head, to Shem, who was to be the parent of that holy stock from whom the Messiah was to come; and that Shem, with a spirit of foresight, buried the skull in Calvary, where he knew the Messiah would be crucified. But neither the ancient fathers, nor any modern authors that mention this tradition, were ever persuaded of its truth; and (without any disrespect to them) we may look upon all this as mere fiction. Calmet's Dictionary under the word *Calvary*.

(e) Joel iii. 2.

(f) Gen. xiv. 17, 18.

though others make it different, yet so as to come up near to the said valley, and to lie on the south-east part of the city, not far from the king's gardens. (a) Why it obtained the name of the King's Dale, whether it was from its near situation to the king's palace and gardens, or from its being the place where the kings were wont to exercise themselves, or at least to entertain themselves with seeing others perform their exercises of running, riding, and the like, is not agreed, and very likely will never be determined.

From 2 Sam.
xix. to 1 Kings
viii.

There were several gates belonging to the ancient Jerusalem, that are mentioned in Scripture, but it is no easy matter to discover where their particular situation was. There is reason to believe likewise, that their names have been varied, or that one and the same gate has gone under different appellations; and, as there were several circuits of walls in the city which had their respective gates, it is more than probable, that some of these gates did not lead out of the city into the country. The Gate of the Valley, which doubtless had its name from leading into some valley, (and, * as travellers will have it) to the valley of Jehosaphat, was situate on the east side of the city.

The Dung-gate, which seems to have taken its name from the dung and filth of the beasts that were sacrificed at the temple, being carried out of it, was probably the same with what is now so called, and stands on the east side of the city likewise.

The Water-gate, which took its name from its use, because through it was the water brought to serve the city and the temple, was (b) on the same side; and so was

The Gate of the Fountain, (so called from its nearness to the fountain of Siloam) only inclining a little towards the south.

The Gate of Ephraim, which opened to the main road leading to the tribe of Ephraim, and from it derived its name, stood on the north side of the city, because on that side was that tribe seated; (c) though others had rather place it on the west.

The Horse-gate, Sheep-gate, and Fish-gate, are supposed by some to have had their denominations from the several markets of these creatures that were kept there. The Horse and Sheep-gates were both on the east side, not far from the palace and the temple; and the Fish-gate was on the north, though some, who think it had its name from the fish that were brought from the Mediterranean Sea, had rather place it on the west side.

Lastly, the High-gate, or the Gate of Benjamin, so called from its situation towards the land or tribe of Benjamin, is supposed by some to have been the principal gate of the royal palace; but from what we read (d) concerning Jeremiah's being grossly abused near this gate, it appears to have been situated by the House of the Lord.

Thus we have passed through most of the gates of this ancient city; and on the north side of it (without the walls now, but then probably within them) we meet with some subterraneous chambers that are wonderfully magnificent, and at present called the "sepulchres of the kings," (e) of which some late travellers give us a description to this effect:—"When you come to the place, you pass through an entry hewed out of a rock, which admits you into an open court about twenty-six feet square, all cut out of the rock, which is of solid marble, and serves instead of walls. On the left hand of this court is a portico nine paces long, and four broad (with a kind of architrave running round its front), cut out of the same rock, as are likewise the pillars that support it. At

(a) *Wells's Geography of the Old Test.* vol. iii.

* Our countryman, Mr Sandys, is of opinion, that the Gate of the Valley was formerly the same with what is now called St Stephen's Gate, not far from the Golden Gate, or great gate, which leads into that which was formerly the court of the temple. He likewise supposes, that this gate of St Stephen's was formerly called the Sheep-gate; but into this opinion perhaps he might be led by the nearness of St Stephen's gate to the pool of Bethesda, where the sacrifices were washed, before they were brought to the

priest to be offered: And therefore, since the Valley-gate and the Sheep-gate are distinctly mentioned by Nehemiah, we cannot but think that they must have been different gates. *Wells's Geography of the Old Testament*, vol. iii.

(b) *Nehem.* iii. 26.

(c) *Explication du nouveau Plan de l'ancienne Jerusalem*, par M. Calmet.

(d) *Jeremiah* xx. 2.

(e) *Vid. Thevenot's Voyages*, part i. lib. ii. c. iv. and *Maundrel's Journey from Aleppo to Jerusalem*.

A. M. 2981.
&c. or 4375.
Ant. Chris.
1023, &c.
or 1036.

the end of this portico, there is a passage into the sepulchres, which (when you have crept through it with some difficulty) lets you into a large chamber of above four and twenty feet square. Its sides and ceiling are so exactly square, and its angles so just, that no architect, with levels and plummets, could build a room more regular. From this room you pass into six more, one within another, and all of the same fabric with the first, except that the two innermost are deeper than the rest, and have a descent of about six or seven steps into them. In every one of these rooms (except the first) were coffins of stone, placed in niches along the sides of the room, and amount in all to about fifty."

This perhaps is the only real work that now remains of the Old Jerusalem; and, what makes it justly looked upon as a wonder, is, that the ceiling, the doors, as well as all the rest, their hinges, their posts, their frames, &c. are all cut out of the same continued rock. It may therefore be worth our enquiring a little in what manner these structures were employed, and who possibly might be the persons that were repositied in them.

That these subterraneous structures were not the sepulchres of the kings of Judah, the generality of those that have inspected them are agreed, because the Scripture tells us, that David, and Solomon, and most of their successors were (a) "buried in the city of David;" and yet these grots lie without the gate of Damascus (as it is now called), at a considerable distance from the city of David: But how far this city of David did formerly extend, or where we shall find any other signs of * the places where David and the other kings his successors were buried, we have no hints given us. The reverend Mr Maundrell, from this passage in Scripture, (b) "and Hezekiah slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the chiefest of the sepulchres of the sons of David," is of opinion, that this was the place where Hezekiah, and the sons immediately born to David, that were not repositied in the royal sepulchres, were buried: But it is much more probable (and what both the Syriac and Arabic versions seem to confirm) that, by the sons of David here, we are not to understand his immediate sons, properly so called, but the kings rather that succeeded him. This is a form of speech frequently made use of by the sacred writers; and therefore the sense of "Hezekiah's being buried in the sepulchres of the sons of David," must be, that he was buried in the sepulchres of the kings descended from David.

The more probable opinion, therefore, is that of Le Bruyn, who supposes, that these grots were the sepulchres of Manasseh, his son Amon, and his grandson Josiah, kings of Judah. Of Manasseh the Scripture tells us expressly, that (c) "he was buried in the garden of his own house, in the garden of Uzza; and of Amon it is said, that he was buried in the garden of Uzza," which garden, Manasseh might very probably purchase, and, being taken with the pleasantness of it, might there build him an house, which is here called his own house, in contradistinction to the royal palace, which was built and inhabited by his ancestors on Mount Sion. Of Josiah, indeed, the Sacred History does

(a) 1 Kings ii. 10. and xi. 43.

* Benjamin of Tudela, who wrote about the year 1173, relates, that not above fifteen years before, a wall, belonging to Mount Sion, fell down, and the priests set twenty men to work upon it. Two of these workmen being one day left alone, took up a stone, which opened a passage into a subterraneous place, into which they entered. There they found a palace, supported by marble pillars, and cru-ted over with gold and silver. At the entrance was a table, and upon this table a golden crown and sceptre. This, say the Jews, was David's monument, and opposite to it was Solomon's, adorned in the like man-

ner. As they were attempting to penetrate farther, they were overset by a whirlwind, and remained senseless till the evening, when they heard a voice bidding them arise and begone. Benjamin assures us, that he had this story from the mouth of one Abraham, a pharisee, who, as he said, had been consulted about this event by the patriarch of Jerusalem, and declared, that this was David's monument. But the whole of this account has so much the air of a fable, that it is needless to confute it. *Calmet's Dictionary*, under the word *David*.

(b) 2 Chron. xxxii. 33.

(c) 2 Kings xxi. 18. 26.

not say expressly that he was buried here; all that it tells us is, that he (a) "was buried in the sepulchres of his fathers;" but whether in the city of David, or in the garden of Uzza, it makes no mention: And therefore, since both his father and grandfather were buried in this garden, there is reason to think that Josiah was here buried likewise; especially considering that, in one of these subterraneous rooms (as Le Bruyn tells us), which seemed to be more lofty than the rest, there were three coffins curiously adorned with carved works, which he took to be the coffins of these three kings*.

From 2 Sam.
xix. to 1 Kings
viii.

But of all the buildings that ancient Jerusalem had to boast of, the temple, which David designed, and Solomon perfected, was the most magnificent, We are not, however, to imagine that this temple was built like one of our churches; for it did not consist of one single edifice, but † of several courts and buildings which took up a great deal of ground. The place whereon it was erected was the top of Mount Moriah, and the building all together made an exact square of eight hundred cubits, or one thousand four hundred and sixty feet long on each side, exactly fronting the east, west, north, and south.

(b) To make this building more firm and secure, it was found necessary to begin the foundation at the bottom of the mount; so that the sides were three hundred and thirty-three cubits, or about six hundred and eight feet high, before they were raised to the level of the temple; and this afforded a most noble prospect towards the chief part of the city, which lay westward. It is impossible to compute the labour of laying this foundation, because it is impossible to tell how much of the mountain must in some places be removed, and in others filled up, to bring it to an exact square for so great a height; but when we consider that there were 180,000 workmen, for seven years and an half, constantly employed, we cannot but admire what business could be found for so many hands to do; and yet when we reflect on the vastness of this fabric, it would make one no less wonder, how, in so short a time, it could possibly be completed. "For the foundation (as Josephus tells us) was laid prodigiously deep, and the stones were not only of the largest size, but hard and firm enough to endure all weathers, and be proof against the worm. Besides this, they were so mortised into one another, and so wedged into the rock, that the strength and curiosity of the basis was not less admirable than the intended superstructure, and the one was every way answerable to the other."

The ground-plot upon which the temple was built was a square of six hundred cubits every way. It was encompassed with a wall of six cubits high, and the same in breadth, and contained several buildings for different uses, surrounded with cloysters supported by marble pillars. Within this space was the court of the Gentiles fifty cubits wide, and adorned in like manner with cloysters and pillars. To separate this court from the court of the Israelites, there was a wall of five hundred cubits square. The court of the Israelites was an hundred cubits. It was paved with marble of dif-

(a) 2 Chron. xxxv. 24.

* [It is universally known, that the city, which is now called Jerusalem, is not built on the precise site of the ancient city, and that the reports of modern travellers respecting the ruins of many of the places mentioned in the Old and New Testaments, are little better than conjectures. Those who are desirous of making themselves acquainted with some of the latest and most probable of these conjectures, may consult Dr Clarke's Travels in the Holy Land. What is there said of the royal sepulchres, and of our blessed Lord's sepulchre, is extremely plausible, and to me satisfactory.]

† These several parts of the temple the Greeks are

very careful to distinguish by different names. What was properly the temple, they called *ἡ ναὸς*; and the courts and other parts of the temple *τὰ ἱερῶν*. Thus when Zacharias is said to have gone into the temple, to burn incense, Luke i. 9. (which was done in the sanctum) the word is *ναὸς*; but when it is said that Anna the prophetess departed not from the temple, Luke ii. 37. (i. e. lived in that part of the court of the Israelites which was appropriated to religious women), the Greek word is *ἱερὸν*. And this observation holds good all through the New Testament. *Lamy, de Tabern. lib. v. c. 5.*

(b) *Bedford's Chronology*, lib. iv. c. 5.

A. M. 2981,
&c. or 4275.
Ant. Chris.
1029, &c.
or 1036.

ferent colours, and had four gates, to every quarter one, and each rising with an ascent of seven steps. To separate this court from the court of the priests, there was a wall of two hundred cubits square; and the priests court was an hundred cubits, encompassed with cloysters and apartments, where the priests that attended the service of the temple were used to live. This court had but three gates, to the east, to the north, and to the south, and were approached by an ascent of eight steps. These courts were all open, and without any covering; but in case of rain, or other bad weather, the people could retire under the cloysters, that were supported with rows of pillars, and went round every court. In the Israelites court, over against the gate of the priests court, was erected a throne for the king, (which was a magnificent alcove) where he seated himself when he came to the temple. In the priests court was the altar of burnt-offerings, a great deal larger than that of the tabernacle, having ten brazen lavers, whereas the tabernacle had but one, and a sea of brass (which the tabernacle had not) supported by twelve oxen.

On the west side of the altar of burnt-offerings there was an ascent of twelve steps to what we may properly call the temple; and this consisted of three parts, the porch, the sanctuary, and the holy of holies. The porch was about twelve cubits long and twenty broad, at the entrance of which stood the two famous pillars Jachan and Boaz, whose names import, that "God alone was the support of the temple;" and its gate was fourteen cubits wide. The sanctuary, or nave of the temple, was forty cubits long and twenty broad, wherein were the altar of incense, and the table of shew-bread; but because the temple was larger, and wanted more light than the tabernacle, instead of one, it had ten golden candlesticks. The holy of holies was a square of twenty cubits, wherein was placed the ark of the covenant, containing the two tables of stone, wherein God had engraven his ten commandments, but instead of two cherubims, (as were in the tabernacle) in the temple there were four.

Round about the temple, and against the walls thereof (as Josephus tells us) were built thirty cells, or little houses, which served in the way of so many buttresses, and were at the same time no small ornament to it; for there were stories of these cells one above another, whereof the second was narrower than the first, and the third than the second; so that their roofs and balustrades being within each other, made three different terraces (as it were) † upon which one might walk round the temple. Within these little houses were ceiled with cedar, their walls were wainscoted with the same, and embellished with carving, and fretwork overlaid with gold, which with their dazzling splendour made every thing about them look glorious.

Upon the whole then, we may observe, (a) that the glory of this temple did not consist in the bulk or largeness of it, (for in itself it was but a small pile of building, no more than an hundred and fifty feet in length, and an hundred and five in breadth, taking the whole of it together from out to out, and is exceeded by many of our parish churches) but its chief grandeur and excellency lay in its out-buildings and ornaments, in its workmanship, which was every where very curious, and its overlays, which

† The temple itself, strictly so called, had two stories, the upper of which was raised quite above these little houses and their roofs; for their roofs reached no higher than the top of the first story. The second story, which had no building adjoining to its side, made a large room over the sanctuary, and the Holy of Holies, of equal dimensions with them; and it is no improbable opinion that this was the upper chamber, in which the Holy Ghost was pleased to descend upon the apostles in a visible manner. This upper room was appropriated to the pious laity, as a place for them to come and pay their devotions in; and

therefore it seems very likely, that the apostles were here with other devout persons, while the temple was full of Jews of all nations, who were come to celebrate the feast of the Pentecost, and that thereupon they below, hearing the noise, which was occasioned by the shaking of the place, ran up to see the cause of it, and to their great surprise found the apostles distinguished from the other Jews about them, both by "the cloven tongues which sat upon each of them," and by the several different languages that they spake. *Lamy's Introduction*, lib. i. c. 4.

(a) *Prideaux's Connection*, part 1. lib. iii.

were vast and prodigious : for the overlaying of the Holy of Holies only (which was a room but thirty feet square, and twenty high) amounted to six hundred talents of gold, which comes to four millions three hundred and twenty thousand pounds of our sterling money. From 2 Sam. xix. to 1 Kings. viii

To conclude this dissertation then, (a) in the words of the Jewish historian, “ The whole frame, in fine, says he, was raised upon stones, polished to the highest degree of perfection, and so artificially put together, that there was no joint to be discerned, no sign of any working tools being upon them, but the whole looked liker the work of Providence and nature, than the product of art and human invention. And as for the inside, whatever carving, gilding, embroidery, rich silks, and fine linen could do, of these there was the greatest profusion. The very floor of the temple was overlaid with beaten gold, the doors were large and proportioned to the height of the walls, twenty cubits broad, and still gold upon gold ” “ In a word, it was gold all over ; and * nothing was wanting either within or without, that might contribute to the glory and magnificence of the work.”

(a) *Jewish Antig.* lib. viii. c. 2.

* It is not to be doubted, but that Solomon made all the utensils and ornaments of the temple proportionable, both in number and richness, to that of the edifice ; and yet Josephus seems to have carried his account beyond all credibility, when he tells us, that there were 10,000 tables, besides those of the shew-bread ; 10,000 candlesticks, besides those in the holy place ; 80,000 cups for drink-offerings ; 100,000 basins of gold, and double that number of silver : when he tells us, that Solomon caused to be made 1000

ornaments for the sole use of the high priest ; 10,000 linen robes and girdles for that of the common priests ; and 200,000 more for the Levites and musicians : when he tells of 200,000 trumpets made according to Solomon’s direction, with 200,000 more made in the fashion that Moses had appointed, and 400,000 musical instruments of a mixt metal, between gold and silver, called by the ancients Electrum—concerning all which, we can only say, that the text is either silent, or contradicts this prodigious account. *Universal History*, lib. i. c. 7.

THE END OF THE FIFTH BOOK.

THE HISTORY

OF THE

BIBLE.

BOOK VI.

CONTAINING AN ACCOUNT OF THINGS FROM THE BUILDING OF SOLOMON'S TEMPLE TO THE BABYLONISH CAPTIVITY, IN ALL ABOUT 400 YEARS,—ACCORDING TO DR HALES 422 YEARS FROM THE FOUNDATION OF THE TEMPLE, AND OF COURSE 414 YEARS AND 6 MONTHS FROM ITS BEING FINISHED.

CHAPTER I.

FROM THE FINISHING OF THE TEMPLE TO THE REIGN OF JEHOSEPHAT.

THE HISTORY.

3001, WHEN Solomon had finished the temple, which was in the eleventh year of his reign, and in the eighth month of that year, even when all the solemn feasts were over, he thought it advisable to defer the dedication of it until the next year, (which was a year of Jubilee), and determined to have it done some days before the † feast of taber-
From 1 Kings viii. to the end of 2 Chron.

† This feast was appointed in commemoration of the children of Israel's dwelling in booths, whilst they were in the wilderness, and of the tabernacle, which at that time was built, where God promised to meet them, to dwell among them, and to sanctify the place with his glory; and might therefore be well reckoned a very proper season for the dedication of the temple, which was to succeed in the tabernacle's place. *Bedford's Scripture Chronology*, lib. vi. c. 2.

A. M. 3001,
&c. or 4301.
Ant. Chrs.
1003, &c.
or 1020.

nacles. To this purpose he sent all the elders of Israel, the princes of the tribes, and the heads of the families notice, to repair to Jerusalem at the time appointed; when accordingly all being met together, the priests and Levites carried into the temple, first, all the presents that David had made to it; then set up, in their several places, the vessels and ornaments appointed for the service of the altar and the sanctuary; and, lastly, brought the || ark of the covenant, together with the † tabernacle of the congregation, into its new habitation with great solemnity; the king and elders of the people walking before, while others of the priests offered an †² infinite number of sacrifices in all the places through which the ark passed.

When the ark was placed in the sanctuary, and the priests and Levites in their turns were celebrating the praises of God, the temple was filled with a * miraculous cloud,

|| The Sacred History tells us, that "in this ark there was nothing save the two tables of stone which Moses put there at Horeb," 1 Kings viii. 9. and yet the author to the Hebrews affirms, "that in this ark was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, as well as the tables of the covenant," Heb. ix. 4. Now, to reconcile this, some imagine, that before the ark had any fixed and settled place (which is the time the apostle refers to) all these things were included in it, though it was chiefly intended for nothing but the tables of the covenant; but that, when it was placed in the temple, nothing was left in it but these two tables; all the other things were deposited in the treasury of the temple, where the book of the law (as we read 2 Chronicles xxxiv. 14.) was found in the days of king Josias. Others however pretend, that in the time of the apostle, i. e. towards the end of the Jewish commonwealth, Aaron's rod and the pot of manna were really kept in the ark, though in the days of Solomon they were not. But this answer would be more solid and satisfactory, if we knew for certain, that in the times of the apostle the ark of the covenant was really in the sanctuary of the temple which Herod built, whereas Josephus (de Bello Jud. lib. vi. c. 6.) tells us expressly, that when the Romans destroyed the temple, there was nothing found in the Holy of Holies. *Calmet's Commentary.*

† But the question is, what tabernacle, whether that which Moses made, and was then at Gibeon, 2 Chron. i. 3. or that which was made by David, and was then at Jerusalem? To end this dispute some have imagined, that both these tabernacles were, at this time, carried into the temple and laid up there, that all danger of superstition and idolatry might thereby be avoided, and that no worship might be performed any where, but only at the house which was dedicated to God's service: But it is observed by others, that the convenience which David made for the reception of the ark was never called the tabernacle of the covenant; it was no more than a plain tent, set up in some large room of the royal palace, until a more proper receptacle could be provided for it; but the tabernacle that was at Gibeon was the same that sojourned so long in the wilderness. The tent was the same, the curtains the same, and the altar the same that was made by Moses; or at least if there was any alteration in it, (as things of this na-

ture could hardly subsist so very long without some repair), the reparation was always made according to the original model, and with as little deviation as possible. It is not to be doubted then, but that the Mosaic tabernacle is the tabernacle here intended, which, for the prevention of schism, and to make the temple the centre of devotion, was now taken down, and reposed in the treasury or store-house, where it continued until the time that Jerusalem was taken by the Chaldeans, when Jeremiah, as Josephus informs us, (Jewish Antiq. lib. viii. c. 2.) was admonished by God to take it, and the ark, and the altar of incense, and hide them in some secret places (from whence it is doubted whether they have ever yet been removed) for fear of profanation. *Patrick's and Calmet's Commentaries.*

†² The number of sacrifices which upon this occasion are said to be offered, was "two and twenty thousand oxen, and an hundred and twenty thousand sheep," 1 Kings viii. 63. but we must not suppose that these were offered all on one day, much less on one altar. The continuance of this meeting was for fourteen days, seven in the feast of tabernacles, and seven in that of the dedication; and because the brazen altar, before the door of the temple, was not sufficient to receive all these sacrifices, Solomon, by a special licence from God, ordered other altars to be erected in the court of the priests, and perhaps in other places, which were to serve only during this present solemnity, when such a vast number of sacrifices were to be offered: For, at other times, no other altar was allowed but this brazen one which Moses had made. It is no bad observation however of Josephus (lib. viii. c. 2.) that, during the oblation of so many sacrifices, the Levites took care to "perfume the air with the fragrant of incense and sweet odours, to such a degree, that the people were sensible of it at a distance;" - otherwise the burning of so many beasts at one time must have occasioned an offensive smell. *Patrick's Commentary.*

* When Moses had finished the tabernacle, according to the pattern which God had shewed him, and set it all up, it is said, that "a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle, so that Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle," Exod. xl. 34, 35. And therefore,

insomuch, that the priests could not continue to officiate. This Solomon observing, took occasion from thence to infer, that the Lord had taken possession of the place; and having for some time fallen prostrate with his face to the ground, he raised himself up, and turning towards the sanctuary, * addressed his prayer to God, and "beseeched him graciously to accept of the house which he built for his sake; to bless and sanctify it, and to hear the prayers of all, whether Jews or Gentiles, who, upon any occasion, either of public or private calamity, might direct their supplications to him † from that holy place. He beseeched him likewise to fulfil the promise which he had been pleased to make to his father David, in favour of his family and the kings his successors;" and having thus finished his prayer, he turned to the people, and, after he had blessed them, gave them a strict charge to be sincere in their duty towards God, to walk in his statutes, and observe his laws.

From 1 Kings:
viii. to the end
of 2 Chron.

While Solomon was thus addressing his prayers to God, and his exhortations to the people, a victim was laid upon the altar, and God, to testify his acceptance of what was doing, sent immediately a fire from heaven which consumed it, and all the other sacrifices that were about it; which, when the people, who were witnesses of the miracle, perceived, they fell upon their faces, and worshipped the God of Israel: And it was, very probably, on the ‡ night following, that he appeared to Solomon again in a dream, and

when the temple was finished and the ark brought into the sanctuary, God gave the like indication of his presence and residence there. Hereby he testified his acceptance of the building, and furnishing of the temple, as a service done to his name; and hereby he declared, that as the glory of the ark (that sacred symbol of his presence) had been long eclipsed by its frequent removes and mean habitations; so now his pleasure was, that it should be looked upon with the same esteem and veneration as when Moses conducted it into the tabernacle. For this cloud, we must know, was not a heavy, thick, opaque body, such as is ingendered in the air, and arises from vapours and exhalations, but a cloud that was dark and luminous at the same time, whose darkness was awful and majestic, and whose internal part was bright and refulgent, darting its rays upon occasion, and exhibiting its light through its obscurity: So that, according to its different phases or positions, it became to the Israelites a pillar of a cloud by day, to screen them from the heat, and at night a pillar of fire, to give them light, *Exod. xiii. 21.* Whatever it was that constituted this strange appearance, it is certain this mixture of light and darkness was looked upon as a symbol of the Divine presence; for so the Scripture has informed us, that He, who dwelleth in light that is inaccessible, "made darkness his secret place, his pavilion round about him with dark water, and thick clouds to cover him," *Psal. xviii. 11.* *Calmet's Commentary.*

Thou art every where, vouchsafe also to be with us. Thou that seest and hearest all things, look down from thy throne in heaven, and give ear to our supplications in this place. Thou that never failest to assist those that call upon thee day and night, and love and serve thee as they ought to do, have mercy upon us." There is another prayer, in the same historian, addressed to God on this same occasion, wherein Solomon blesses him for the exaltation of his family, and implores the continuance of his goodness and peculiar presence in the temple, well worth the reader's perusal, though too long to be inserted here.

† It is the same thing, no doubt, to God wherever we pray, so long as we pray with a pious mind and a devout heart, and make the subject of our prayers such good things as he has permitted us to ask; but it was not consistent with the preservation of the Jewish state and religion, that he should be publicly worshipped in every place. For, since the Jews were on every side surrounded with idolaters, led away with divers superstitions, but ignorant all of the true God, it was highly necessary, that in all Divine matters there should be a strict union between them all both in heart and voice, and consequently that they should all meet together in one place to worship God, lest they should run into parties, and fall into idolatry, as it happened when the kingdom became divided into two. And, therefore, though Solomon knew very well, that in every place God was ready to hear the prayers of every devout supplicant, yet, for the preservation of peace and unity, he was minded to give the people a notion, that God would be found more exorable to the prayers which were offered in the temple of Jerusalem, and thereby excite them to a frequentation of that rather than any other place. *Le Clerc's Commentary in locum.*

‡ It is thus that we have placed the time of God's second appearance to Solomon; but some are of opinion that it did not happen till two and twenty years after God's first appearance, and after Solomon had

* The prayer which Josephus puts into Solomon's mouth, upon this occasion, is to this effect:—"O Lord, thou that inhabitest eternity, and hast raised out of nothing the mighty fabric of this universe, the heavens, the air, the earth, and the sea; thou that fillest the whole, and every thing that is in it, and art thyself unbounded and incomprehensible; look down graciously upon thy servants that have presumed to erect a temple here to the honour of thy great name. Lord, hear our prayers, and receive our sacrifices.

A. M. 3001, * signified to him, "That he had heard his prayer; did accept of the temple which he had built for him; and would not fail to listen to the petitions that proceeded from thence; that, if he persevered in his obedience to him, as his father David had done, he would establish his throne, and perpetuate a race of successors in his family; but that, if either he or his children prevaricated in this matter, he would cut them off, overturn his kingdom, and destroy the temple."

The feast of the dedication, in conjunction with that of tabernacles, lasted for fourteen days; and when all things were thus performed with the greatest order and solemnity, on the morrow the king dismissed the people, who returned to their respective homes with glad and joyful hearts.

Solomon (it must be observed) had a singular taste for building; therefore, after he had finished and consecrated the temple, he undertook a palace for himself, *² which had all the magnificence that can be imagined, another for his Egyptian queen, and a third that was called † "the house of the forest of Lebanon," where he chiefly chose to

accomplished all his buildings, to which the connection of the discourse seems to give some countenance; "and it came to pass, when Solomon had finished the building of the house of the Lord, and the king's house, and all that he was pleased to do, that the Lord appeared to him a second time," 1 Kings ix. 1, 2. It seems a little strange, however, that God should delay answering this prince's prayer for thirteen years together, and then, when he appeared to him, tell him, "I have heard thy prayer and the supplication that thou hast made before me, and I have halloved this house which thou hast built," ver. 3. And therefore, to solve this difficulty, it is reasonable to think, that the division of this ninth chapter is wrong, that the first verse of it should be annexed to the conclusion of the preceding chapter, and so terminate the account of what Solomon had done; and that the next chapter should begin with the second verse, where the historian enters upon a fresh subject, viz. the answer that God returned to Solomon's prayer, which he continues to the tenth verse, and presents us with it all at once, that he might not break the thread of his narration. *Calmet's Commentary* on 1 Kings ix. 2.

* Josephus has made a very handsome comment upon the answer which God made Solomon in his dream. The voice told him farther, says he, "That in case of such an apostacy, (as he had before mentioned) his new erected fabric should, by Divine permission, come to be sacked, and burnt by the hands of barbarians, and Jerusalem itself laid in rubbish and ashes by a merciless enemy; insomuch, that people should stand amazed at the very report of so incredible a misery and distress, and be wondering one to another, how it could come to pass, that a nation which was but yesterday, the envy of mankind for riches, external glory, and renown, should now, all on a sudden, be sunk and lost to the last degree of wretchedness and contempt, and reduced to this despicable state too by the same hand that raised them. To which questions their own guilty consciences shall make this answer: 'We have forsaken our God; we have abandoned the religion of our forefathers, and of our country, and all this is justly befallen us for our sins.'" *Jewish Antiq.* lib. viii. c. ii.

*² The description of this palace, which we may gather from Josephus, Lamy, and others that have treated of Solomon's buildings, is in this manner related: "Upon several rows of pillars there was erected a spacious pile of building, in the nature of a common hall, for the hearing of causes. It was an hundred cubits in length, fifty in breadth, and in depth thirty, supported by fifteen square columns, covered with Corinthian work in cedar, and fortified with double doors, curiously wrought, that served both for the security and ornament of the place. In the middle of this hall was another edifice of thirty cubits square, and underset with strong pillars, wherein was placed a throne of state, on which the king himself used to sit personally in judgment. On the right hand of this court of justice stood the king's own palace, and on the left that which he built for Pharaoh's daughter, both fitted up with cedar, and built with huge stones of ten cubits square, which were partly plain, and partly overlaid with the most precious marble. The rooms were hung with rich hangings, and beautified with images, and sculptures of all kinds, so exquisitely finished, that they seemed to be alive and in motion. It would be an endless work (says Josephus) to give a particular survey of this mighty mass of building; so many courts and other contrivances, such a variety of chambers and offices, great and little, long and large galleries, vast rooms of state, and others for feasting and entertainment, set out as richly as could be with costly furniture and gildings; besides that, all the services for the king's table were of pure gold. In a word, the whole house was, in a manner, made up, from top to bottom, of white marble, cedar, gold and silver, with precious stones, here and there intermingled upon the walls and ceilings, after the manner of the adorning of the temple." *Jewish Antiq.* lib. viii. c. 2.

† Some commentators are of opinion, that this house was the same with the palace which Solomon built in Jerusalem, and that it had its name from the tall pillars that supported it, which looked like the cedars in the forest of Lebanon; but the contrary is manifest, because the Holy Scripture speaks of it as a distinct building, though perhaps it might not be far distant from the other, on some cool shady moun-

reside. These were the works of thirteen years: And as Hiram king of Tyre was very kind in supplying him with men, money, and materials to carry on these, and many more stately structures; Solomon, to express his gratitude, or to clear off the debt which he had contracted with him, || offered him twenty cities in the land of Galilee, adjoining to his own country. But as these places † did not suit his convenience, he refused to accept of them; and therefore Solomon having made him, no doubt, some other recompence more to his satisfaction, took and repaired these cities; and having built store-cities likewise in the country, he sent colonies of his own subjects to inhabit them, that they might be a curb and restraint on the Syrians of Zobah, who had formerly been conquered by David, and, upon their revolt, but lately reduced by Solomon.

From 1 Kings
viii. to the end
of 2 Chron.

To conclude the account of Solomon's public buildings. He built the walls of Jerusalem, and a senate-house in the same city, called Millo. He repaired and fortified Hazor, Megiddo, the two Beth-Horons, Baalah, ‡² Tadmor in the wilderness of Syria, and

tain, which made it resemble Mount Lebanon. For it is an idle fancy to think that this house was really built on Lebanon, since we read of Solomon's having his throne, 1 Kings vii. 7. and the golden shields that he made, placed in it, 1 Kings x. 17. which he scarce would have removed to the very extremity of his kingdom: And therefore we may conclude, (as indeed it appears from 1 Kings vii. 2.) that this house was near Jerusalem, and called by the name of the forest of Lebanon, (just as many pleasant and delightful places in that country were called Carmel,) because it was in a lofty place like Lebanon, and the trees which grew upon it made it very shady and cool, and consequently proper for Solomon to dwell there in summer, as he did in his palace in Jerusalem in winter. *Patrick's* and *Calmet's* Commentary on 1 Kings vii. 2.

|| It is an express injunction which God gives the Israelites, that the land wherein the people had a right by a Divine lot, and himself a right as being the sole proprietor thereof, was not to be sold or alienated for ever, Lev. xxv. 23. How then could Solomon, without violating this law, pretend to give Hiram twenty cities in the land of Galilee? Now to this some have replied, that Solomon did not give Hiram a property and perpetual right to those cities, but only assigned him the possession of them for a time, until the debt which he had contracted for the several supplies he had from him, while he was building the temple, was satisfied. Others think, that upon supposition that these cities were inhabited by Israelites, Solomon did not give Hiram (as indeed he could not) their particular possessions, but only his own royalties over them, (which he might justly do) and all the profits he received from them, which, according to the taxes then imposed, 1 Kings xii. 4. were not inconsiderable. But there is no reason for these far-fetched solutions, when the Scripture expressly tells us, that these cities were not in the territories of Israel, nor inhabited at that time by the Israelites, 2 Chron. viii. 2. They were indeed some of them conquered by the king of Egypt, who gave them to Solomon as a portion with his daughter, and others by Solomon himself, who, as *Selden* observes, (*De Jure Nat. et Gen.* lib. 6. cap. 16.) had "a right to dispose of those lands which he had conquered in vo-

luntary war, without the consent of the senate:" And this may be one reason why he gave these, rather than other cities, because these were certainly in his power to give, when others perhaps were not. A learned author upon this subject has given a quite different turn to the sense of the passage: For his opinion is, that Hiram did not return these cities, because he thought them not good enough, but because he was unwilling to receive so large a remuneration for the few good offices he had done Solomon, and was minded rather that his favours of this kind should be all gratuitous. He therefore makes the word *Cabul* (which is the name that Hiram gives to the country where these cities stood) a title of respect, and not of contempt; for he derives it from the Hebrew *chebes*, which signifies a bond or chain, intimating, that these two neighbouring kings had mutually bound themselves in a bond of friendship, Solomon by giving, and Hiram by returning the cities now under consideration. This is very pretty; but it is carrying the point of generosity in the king of Tyre a little too high, in my opinion, considering his acceptance of, if not express stipulation for, such a quantity of corn and oil, in lieu of the timber which he sent Solomon, 1 Kings v. 10, 11. *Patrick's* and *Le Clerc's* Commentaries, and *Pool's* Annotations.

† The reason is, because the Tyrians, being very commodiously situated for that purpose, were, in a manner, wholly addicted to merchandize; and therefore would not remove from the sea-coasts, to live in a soil which was fat and deep, and, consequently, required a great deal of labour to cultivate it, which was a business that they were very little accustomed to. *Bedford's* Scripture Chronology, lib. vi. c. 2.

‡² Tadmor, which by the Greeks is called *Palmyra*, is situated in the wilderness of Syria, upon the borders of Arabia Deserta, inclining towards the Euphrates. *Josephus* places it two days journey from the Upper Syria, one day's journey from the Euphrates, and six days journey from Babylon. And the reason he gives why Solomon was inclined to build a city in this place, was, because, in all the country round about, there was no such thing as a well or fountain, but in this spot only, to be found. If we may guess by the ruins, which later travellers give us the description of, this city was certainly one of the finest

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Gezer, which the king of Egypt took from the Canaanites, and gave it in dower with his daughter. He fortified all the cities, which he made his magazines for corn, wine, and oil, and those where his chariots and horses were kept. He subdued all the Hittites, and Hivites, and Amorites, and Perizzites, that any where remained in the land of Israel, and laid on them all the drudgery and servile labour: But * as for his own subjects, he appointed them either to be surveyors of his works, or guards to his person, or commanders in the army, or traders and merchants, that so he might make his nation as famous and as rich and flourishing as it was possible to be effected by human policy.

But it was not only a multitude of hands, but a large supply of wealth likewise, that was necessary to carry on so many expensive buildings; and therefore Solomon took care to cultivate the trade to Ophir, which his father had begun, from Elam and † Ezion-Geber, two ports in the Red Sea, whither himself went in person to inspect the building of the ships, and to provide them with able and experienced seamen, which his good friend and ally, Hiram, was never backward to furnish him with. So that by this means his subjects, who soon attained to the art of navigation, were enabled to make several advantageous voyages; and, particularly in one fleet, *² brought him home no

and most magnificent in the East, and it is somewhat surprising, that history should give us no account, either when or by whom it was reduced to the sad condition wherein it lies at this day. But the true reason for his building this town in so desolate a place, was the commodiousness of its situation to cut off all commerce between the Syrians and Mesopotamians, and to prevent their caballing and conspiring together against him, as they had done against his father David. *Le Clerc's Commentary.* If the reader is desirous to know the present state of this ruined city, he may find it related in the *Philosophical Transactions* for October, 1695, in a letter from Dr *Hallifax* to Dr *Bernard*, or in *Wells's Geography* of the Old Testament, vol. iii. who has borrowed it from thence. [The ruins of Palmyra, as well as of Baalbeck, are likewise described by Messrs Wood and Dawkins, and likewise by Mr Bruce; but the description of Palmyra given in the last edition of the travels of Mr Bruce is not consistent with itself. In the introduction to his work, he represents them as most magnificent and extensive, referring to his friend Mr Wood for a more minute and accurate description. In a journal dated Sidon, Sept. 16th 1767, and appended to the account of his life and writings, which is prefixed to his works, he represents the account of Mr Wood as extremely inaccurate, and says expressly, that the ornamental parts, which yet remain of the temple of the sun, "are very poorly imagined in most places, and in all ill executed!" As the ruins of Palmyra and Baalbeck have nothing to do with the history of the Bible, I shall not waste either my own or my reader's time in vainly attempting to reconcile this traveller either with himself or with his friend. I believe that the ruins of both cities furnish clear proofs of ancient magnificence.]

* History indeed takes notice of the same temper in Sesostris, king of Egypt, who, upon his return home from his several expeditions, took it in his head to build temples in all the cities of Egypt, but would suffer no Egyptian to do any servile work therein. All the work of this nature was performed by the captives that he brought with him from the wars; and

therefore, to perpetuate the remembrance of his kindness to his subjects, as well as remove some possible odium from himself, upon every temple he ordered this inscription to be set up, οὐδὲς ἐργάσιος εἰς αὐτὰ μέρησιν, *No native was ever a labourer here.* *Diodor. Bibliot. lib. i.*

† Josephus will needs have it, that Ezion-Geber is the same with Berenice, which lies indeed upon the Red Sea, but then it is upon the western or African shore thereof; whereas the Scripture is positive, that it was a port of Idumæa, or Arabia Deserta, situate upon the gulf of Elam, which is on the opposite shore. Elam, or Eloth, or Elath, (for it was called by all these names) was situate upon the same, and might possibly have its name from thence. When David conquered Edom, or Idumæa, he made himself master of this port, 2 Sam. viii. 14. His son, we see, built ships here, and sent them from hence to Ophir for gold, 2 Chron. viii. 17, 18. It continued in the possession of the Israelites about an hundred and fifty years, till, in the time of Joram, the Edomites recovered it, 2 Kings viii. 20.; but it was again taken from them by Azariah, and by him left to his son, 2 Kings xiv. 22. His grandson Ahaz, however, lost it again to the king of Syria, 2 Kings xvi. 6. and the Syrians had it in their hands a long while, till, after many changes under the Ptolomies, and the Seleucidæ, it came at length into the possession of the Romans. It was formerly a small town, with fruitful fields about it, but now there is nothing left but a tower, which serves as an habitation for the governor, who is subject to the governor of Grand Cairo, and no signs of fruitfulness are to be seen in any parts adjoining to it. *Patrick's Commentary*, and *Calmet's Dictionary* under the word *Elam*.

*² As great a king as Solomon was, we find he turned merchant; and yet the imperial laws forbid noblemen to exercise trade and commerce, as a thing below them; and much less then (as Bodinus de Republica, lib. vi. c. 2.) does it become a king. But we must not measure antiquity by our own times. What might be then commendable may now have a different appearance. But the same author is very right in

less than || four hundred and twenty talents of gold, with many other commodities, and curiosities of great value. In short, Solomon was one of the richest and most magnificent princes that were then on the face of the earth. In his time, silver was no more regarded than stones in the street: His annual revenues were six hundred and sixty-six talents of gold, besides the tributes he received from the kings and nations that were in subjection to him; the subsidies which his subjects the Israelites paid; and the sums arising from the merchants for his customs. The bucklers of his guards were of gold; the † ivory throne whereon he sat was overlaid with it; and all the utensils of his palaces, and vessels of his table (which, †² for magnificence and sumptuousness of provision, exceeded all that was ever known before) were of the same metal. Presents of gold, of rich stuffs, of spices, of arms, of horses, and mules, were sent to him from every quarter; and to see the face, and hear the wisdom of the renowned Solomon, was the prevailing ambition of the great men of that age.

From 1 Kings
viii. to the end
of 2 Chron.

Captivated with this desire, the queen of Sheba came to Jerusalem, attended with a great retinue, and brought with her rich presents of gold, spices, and precious stones. Her purpose was to try if Solomon's wisdom was answerable to the high commendations she had heard of it; and therefore, in discourse, she proposed to him several enigmatical questions. But when she heard his clear and satisfactory solutions, she was not a little amazed at the profoundness of his judgment; and when she had seen the beauty and worship of the temple, the magnificence of his court, and the sumptuousness of * his table and attendants, she was quite astonished, and frankly owned to him, that what herself had seen did far surpass any the most extravagant report she had ever

one concession that he makes, viz. that, though he would not have kings now to be merchants, yet, if he might have his choice, "I had rather a prince should be a merchant, says he, than a tyrant, and that noblemen should rather trade than oppress, and make a prey of their tenants." *Patrick's Commentary.*

|| In 2 Chron. viii. 18. the number of talents brought home to Solomon are said to be four hundred and fifty. But this is a matter that is easily resolved, if we will but suppose, that the charges of the voyage to and fro cost thirty talents; or that Solomon gave Hiram's servants, for conducting his fleet, thirty talents; or that in refining the whole mass of gold, the waste might be thirty talents: So that, though Solomon's fleet brought him home four hundred and fifty talents, yet by one, or more of these deductions, there came clear to his coffers no more than four hundred and twenty. *Patrick's Commentary.*

† We never read of ivory till about Solomon's days, who perhaps brought elephants out of India, or at least took care to have a great deal of ivory imported from thence; for, in after-ages, we read of ivory beds, and ivory palaces, &c. At this time, however, it was every whit as precious as gold; and therefore we must not suppose that this throne of Solomon's was entirely overlaid with gold, (for then it might as well have been made of wood) but only in particular places, that so the mixture of gold and ivory, which gave a lustre to each other, might make the throne look more beautiful. The like to this, the text says, "there was not made in any kingdom," 1 Kings x. 20. and perhaps it was so in those days; but, in after-ages, we read, that the throne of the Parthian kings was of gold, encompassed with four

golden pillars, beset with precious stones; and that the Persian kings sat in judgment under a golden vine, (and other trees of gold) the bunches of whose grapes were made of several sorts of precious stones. *Patrick's Commentary.*

†² The provisions of Solomon's table for one day were "thirty measures" (which, according to the Hebrew word *Cor*, as Goodwin has computed it, are six gallons, above an hundred and sixty-eight bushels) "of fine flour, and sixty of meal," (or coarser flour for inferior servants) "ten stall-fed oxen, twenty oxen out of the pastures, and an hundred sheep, besides harts and roebucks, and fallow deer and fatted fowl," or (as Bochart translates the word) "the choicest of all fatted things," 1 Kings iv. 22. 23. and this, according to the calculation which some have made from the quantity of bread that was every day consumed, must make Solomon's family consist, at least, of forty or fifty thousand souls. *Calmet's Commentary.*

* Our excellent commentator, Bishop Patrick, tells us, that a very great man of our own (but is silent as to his name) has observed, that such things as the difference of apparel, the order of sitting at table, and the attendance of Solomon's servants and ministers, were justly admired by the queen of Sheba, as an indication of his wisdom; "for they are the outworks" (as he calls them) "which preserve majesty itself from approaches and surprisals; and whatsoever prince departs from these forms, and trappings, and ornaments of his dignity and pre-eminence, will hardly be able, at some time, to preserve the body itself of majesty from intrusion, invasion, and violation.

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yet heard of him : and so having made him very * great and noble presents, and received others from him that were not inconsiderable, she took her leave, and returned to her own country highly pleased and satisfied with her visit.

Hitherto we have seen nothing in Solomon but what was truly great and wonderful ; but the later actions of his life do sadly tarnish and disgrace his character, for he gave himself up to the love of strange women, such as were descended from idolatrous nations, and, besides Pharaoh's daughter † mentioned before, married wives from among the Moabites, the Ammonites, the Hittites, the Idumeans, and the Sidonians. Nay, so unbounded was his lust, that he had seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines, who conspired not a little to pervert his heart, and seduce him, in his old age, to the worship of their several idols.

Provoked at this his sad apostasy, God sent a prophet to upbraid him with his ingratitude, and to pronounce this heavy judgment upon him :—" That, as he had revolted from his worship, so the major part of his kingdom should revolt from him, and put themselves under the government of one of his servants, though not in his days, yet in those of his immediate successor : " and, to make him sensible that this judgment began already to operate, he raised up several enemies to the disturbance of his peace, which, as long as he continued in God's service, he enjoyed without interruption.

*² The first of these was Hadad of the blood royal of Edom, who having fled from Joab, when he ravaged the country, and put the male children to death, escaped to Pharaoh king of Egypt, where he married his sister Tephneh ; *³ but, upon David's death, returned to his own country, and recovered the kingdom. †² The second was Rezon, who flying from his master Hadadezer king of Zobah, gathered together a great number of men, over whom he made himself captain, and with their assistance seizing on Damascus, he there reigned as king of Syria, and confederated with Hadad to distress Solomon in the declining part of his reign. But †³ the most dangerous enemy of

* After a very complementive speech, in which Josephus makes this queen address king Solomon, among other valuable presents recorded in Scripture, " they speak also," says he, " of a root of balsam which she brought with her, which " (according to a tradition we have) " was the first plant of the kind that ever came into Judea, where it hath propagated so wonderfully ever since. *Jewish Antiquities*, lib. viii. c. 2.

† Pharaoh's daughter is generally supposed to have been a proselyte to the Jewish religion, and therefore Solomon, in marrying her, incurred no fault ; but, in marrying so many women besides, and these of a different religion, he committed two sins against the law ; one, in multiplying wives, and another, in marrying those of strange nations, who still retained their idolatry ; and therefore the wise son of Sirach, amidst all the encomiums that he heaps upon Solomon, could not forget this heinous iniquity, and terrible flaw in his character. " Thou didst bow thy loins to women, and, by thy body, thou wast brought into subjection. Thou didst stain thine honour, and pollute thy seed, so that thou broughtest wrath upon thy children, and wast grieved for thy folly. *Eccclus.* xlvii. 19, 20. and *Patrick's Commentary*.

*² Hadad was a young prince of the royal family of Idumæa, who fled into Egypt, when David conquered that country ; for David having obtained a signal victory under the conduct of Abishai, who, at that time, commanded in chief, sent Joab afterwards with

an order to kill all the males that should be found in the land. But Hadad had escaped into Egypt, where, finding favour in the eyes of the king, he married his wife's sister, and there settled. But, after the death of David, he returned into Idumæa, and gave Solomon no small molestation. For, entering into a league with Rezon, a fugitive from his master Hadadezer king of Zobah, but who had now made himself king of some part of Syria, he, by his assistance, made so many inroads upon the land of Israel, that all things were in the utmost confusion even before Solomon died. *Calmet's Commentary*, and *Josephus's Jewish Antiq.* lib. viii. c. 2.

*³ The sister of Pharaoh's wife Taphenes, 1 Kings xi. 19.

†² When David made war against Hadadezer, Rezon, one of his generals, escaped from the field of battle with the troops under his command ; and having lived for a little while by plunder and robbery, at length seized on Damascus, and reigned there. But his reign was not long ; for David took Damascus, as well as the other parts of Syria, and left it in subjection to his son Solomon, till God was pleased to suffer this Rezon to recover Damascus, and there re-establish himself, to the great disturbance of the latter part of Solomon's reign. *Calmet's Commentary*.

†³ As Solomon was engaged in several great buildings, he took care to set proper persons over the works, among whom Jeroboam was one, and the workmen under his command seem to be chiefly of the

all was Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, a bold and enterprising man, whom Solomon had made overseer of his buildings, and who, for his great abilities, was the chief ruler in the house of Joseph, i. e. in the tribes of Ephraim and Manesseh. † The prophet Ahijah, as he was walking in the fields, happened to meet him; and, having acquainted him from God, that he had appointed him to be Solomon's successor in ten tribes out of twelve, and that, if he would adhere to his service, the government should be established in his family; as he was but ill affected to Solomon before, and now encouraged by the prophet's promises, he began to stir, and solicit the people to a revolt. †² The king having intelligence of this, was thinking to take him into custody, but he made his escape, and fled †³ unto Shishak king of Egypt, where he continued for the small remainder of Solomon's life, †⁴ who, having reigned forty years, died about the

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tribe of Ephraim. How he acquitted himself in this capacity we are not told; but the pretence of his being angry with Solomon, and fomenting jealousies among the people, was the building of Millo. Millo was a deep valley between the old Jerusalem and the city of David, part of which David filled up, and thereon made both a fortress and a place for the people to assemble. Another part of it Solomon filled up to build a palace for his queen, the daughter of Pharaoh. The prodigious expence which this work cost, gave Jeroboam an opportunity to infuse a spirit of sedition into his brethren of the tribe of Ephraim; to complain heavily of hard labour they were forced to submit to, and the taxes they were obliged to pay; and to represent the whole thing as a work of vanity, merely to gratify a proud foreign woman, and a silly doting king; and, by these insinuations, he wrought in the people a disaffection to Solomon and his government. *Patrick's Commentary*, and *Calmet's Dictionary*, under the word *Millo*.

† Ahijah was a native of Shiloh, and one of those who wrote the Annals of King Solomon's Reign, 2 Chron. ix. 29. He is thought to have been the person who spake twice to Solomon from God; once, while he was building the temple, at which time he promised him his protection, 1 Kings vi. 12. and at another time, when he had fallen into all his irregularities, and God expressed his indignation against him in bitter threats and reproaches, 1 Kings xii. 6. His prediction to Solomon, that he would one day be perverted by women; and that to Jeroboam, that heifers (meaning the two golden calves which he set up) would alienate him from the service of God, are both taken notice of by *Epiphanius*, de Vita & Morte Prophet. *Calmet's Dict.* under the word *Ahijah*.

†² How Solomon came to know what was thus transacted between Ahijah and Jeroboam alone, is a question of no great difficulty; for perhaps the prophet made no scruple to report what he had delivered in the name of the Lord; perhaps Jeroboam himself, being puffed up with this assurance, could not contain, but told it to some of his confidants, who spread it abroad; or perhaps his servants, though they heard not the words that the prophet spake, yet, seeing him rend the garment into twelve parts, and give ten to him, might speak of this strange and unaccountable action; which Solomon, as soon as he came to hear of it, might easily understand, because the same pro-

phet, very likely, had told him, but just before, that the "kingdom should be rent from him," and given to his servant, 1 Kings xiv. 8. *Patrick's Comment.*

†³ All the kings of Egypt, from the time of Abraham, are in the Sacred History called by the name of Pharaoh, unless Rameses, that is mentioned in Gen. xlvii. 11. be the name of a king, not a country; so that this is the first we meet with, called by his proper name from the rest of the Pharaohs. Who this Egyptian prince was, the learned are not agreed. The opinion is pretty general, that it was the famous Sesostris, mentioned in Herodotus, and of whom we have spoke before, but his life could hardly be extended to this period. Our great Usher sets him a vast way backward, even to the time of the Israelites peregrination, and some chronologers carry it farther: But be that as it will, it is very probable, that the prince had taken some offence at Solomon, otherwise he would hardly have harboured such seditious refugees as Jeroboam was. *Patrick's* and *Le Clerc's Commentaries*. See likewise vol. i. p. 620, &c. of this Work.

†⁴ Josephus indeed tells us, (*Antiq.* lib. viii. c. 3.) that Solomon lived to a great age, that he reigned eighty years, and died at ninety-four; but this is a manifest error in that historian, which our saying, that the Scripture gives us only an account of Solomon while he continued in a state of piety, but that Josephus's computation takes in the whole of his life, is a poor and forced way of reconciliation. The authority of Josephus must never be put in balance with that of the holy Scriptures, from whence may be learned, that Solomon lived to the age of fifty-eight, or thereabout; because we may very well presume, that his immoderate pursuit of sensual pleasures both shortened his life and left an eternal stain upon his memory: Otherwise the character, which the author of Ecclesiasticus gives of this prince is very beautiful:—"Solomon reigned in a peaceable time, and was honoured; for God made all quiet round about him, that he might build an house in his name, and prepare his sanctuary for ever. How wise wast thou in thy youth, and as a flood filled with understanding! Thy soul covered the whole earth, and thou filledst it with dark parables. Thy name went far unto the islands, and for thy peace thou wast beloved. The countries marvelled at thee for thy songs and proverbs, and parables, and interpretations. By the

A. M. 3001, fifty-eighth year of his age; was buried in the city of David; and was succeeded by his son † Rehoboam.

&c. or 4421.
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Rehoboam, as soon as his father was dead, went to †² Shechem, where all the chief of the people were met together to proclaim him king; but as the nation had been burdened with some heavy taxes during his father's reign, before they would agree to recognise him, they †³ desired a redress of their grievances, and, in hopes of awing him into a compliance, sent for Jeroboam out of Egypt to appear at the head of the assembly.

The people accordingly presented their address; but, instead of a gracious answer, (which his father's old counsellors by all means advised, as the only way to engage them to his interest for ever), some †⁴ young politicians, that had been * brought up with him, were of a contrary opinion, viz. that such concessions would look like fear and pu-

name of the Lord, which is called the Lord God of Israel, thou didst gather gold as tin, and didst multiply silver as lead: But thou didst bow thy loins unto women, &c." *Ecclus. xlvii. 13, &c.*

† Notwithstanding the vast multitude of wives that Solomon had, the Scripture makes mention of no more than three children, this son, and two daughters, that are spoken of 1 Kings iv. 11. 15. and (what is strange) in the beginning of his story, it takes no notice (as usually it does) of his mother's nation, or family, though in the conclusion of it, (1 Kings xiv. 21-31.) it twice reminds us, that she was an Ammonitess by birth, and that her name was Naamah. Rehoboam was born in the first year of his father's reign, and was therefore much about forty-one when he entered upon the government; but he was an unskilful and imprudent man, and therefore made a very false step at his first accession to the throne. The author of *Ecclesiasticus* gives us no advantageous character of him, when he terms him "a man void of understanding, who turned the people away with his counsel," Chap. xlvii. 23. Nay, his own son makes but a faint apology for him, when he tells the people, that he was "young (young in understanding) and tender hearted, and could not withstand his enemies," 2 Chron. xiii. 7. and therefore some have imagined, that his father Solomon had him in his thoughts, when he said, in his Preacher, "I hated all my labour, which I had taken under the sun, because I was to leave it to a man that should come after me; and who knoweth whether he shall be a wise man or a fool, yet shall he have rule over all my labour, wherein I have laboured: This also is vanity," Chap. ii. 18, 19. *Calmet's* and *Patrick's* Commentaries.

†² This city stood not only in the center of the kingdom of Israel, but in the middle of the tribe of Ephraim, wherein there was the greatest number of malecontents. It was therefore very probably by the management of Jeroboam, or some of his friends, who durst not perhaps venture themselves at Jerusalem, that this city was made choice of for the place of a general convention, because they might more securely propose their grievances (which they were resolved to do), and use a greater freedom of speech than they could at Jerusalem, where the family of David was more powerful, more numerous, and better supported. *Calmet's* Commentary, and *Pool's* Annotations.

†³ What the particular grievances were that these people desired to have redressed, we may gather from 1 Kings iv. 7, &c. viz. the tribute Solomon exacted for his buildings, the expences of his family, and the maintenance of his chariots and horses, which being for the honour of the nation, ought to have been borne more contentedly by a people enjoying such a large share of peace and plenty, and from a Prince who had brought in such vast riches to his subjects, as made silver to be of no value at all in his days, Chap. x. 21. but people are more sensible of their pressures than of their enjoyments, and feel the least burdens when they are most at ease. It is observable, however, that among all their complaints, they take no notice of Solomon's idolatry, or the strange worship which he had introduced, though this, one would think, should have been reckoned among the greatest of their grievances. *Patrick's* Commentary.

†⁴ They were not so young but they might have known better; for as Rehoboam was one and forty years old when he entered upon his kingdom, so these gentlemen, having been brought up with him, must have been much about the same age; but they were raw and unexperienced, and unacquainted with the humours of the people, and therefore they gave the king such unseasonable advice. *Patrick's* Commentary.

* It was a common custom among the kings of the East to have their sons educated among other young lords that were of the same age, which, as it created a generous spirit of emulation, and both endeared the prince to the nobles and the nobles to the prince, could not but tend greatly to the benefit of the public. Sesostris, the most famous prince that ever Egypt produced, is said to have been educated this way: And, by the gallant youths that were his contemporaries and fellow-pupils, it was that he afterwards did so many surprising actions. The same custom was in use among the Persians, as we may learn from the life of Cyrus; and of Alexander the Great we are told, that his father Philip had him trained up, in his youth, among those young noblemen who became his great captains in the conquest of all Asia. So that Solomon's method and design in the education of his son was wise and well concerted, though it failed of success. *Calmet's* Commentary.

sillanimity; that hard words would frighten them into obedience; and that, instead of redressing, his business was to tell them, that he intended to increase their grievances. This counsel Rehoboam had the imprudence to follow; which so disgusted the people, that they threw off all allegiance, and declared for another king. When Rehoboam came to understand this, he † sent Adoram, his collector, to appease them, and probably to assure them that their taxes should be abated; but this pacification came too late: Their passions were so exasperated, that they fell upon the collector and stoned him to death, without so much as once hearing what he had to say. Rehoboam seeing this, thought it high time to consult his own safety, by †² hastening to his chariot, and fleeing to Jerusalem; by which means he secured the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin, but all the rest of the Israelites made choice of Jeroboam. And thus was this great and goodly kingdom, almost in its infancy, split into two parts; and for ever afterwards went under different denominations, the kingdom of Judah and the kingdom of Israel, though the latter included the whole before.

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As soon as Rehoboam was got safe to Jerusalem, he began to meditate revenge for the affront put upon himself in the person of Adoram his collector; and therefore (to reduce the rebel tribes by force of arms) he put himself at the head of an hundred and eighty thousand chosen troops of the two tribes which continued faithful to him. But while they were on their march, the †³ prophet Shemaiah, by the direction of God, advised them to desist, and return every one to his own home; because by the Divine will and pleasure it was that this division of the kingdom came to pass. Hereupon all the army, with Rehoboam's consent, was disbanded; and he, to secure the dominions that were left him, repaired and fortified fifteen frontier towns; built several strong holds in the heart of his country; furnished them with good garrisons and provisions; and erected magazines in several cities, out of which the soldiers might, on all occasions, be supplied with arms.

Jeroboam, on the other hand, was not idle, but enlarged and beautified Shechem, and made it a royal city. After he had resided there for some time, he went to the other side of Jordan, and repaired Penuel, which was anciently a fortified place, and there resided likewise, in hopes of gaining the affections of the two tribes and an half. Amidst all these endeavours to settle himself firm on the throne, there was one thing he thought he had reason to apprehend, viz. that his subjects might return to their allegiance to the house of David, in case they were permitted to go up thrice every year (as the law directed) to worship at Jerusalem; he therefore made a bold alteration in religion, and set up two golden calves, (with altars belonging to them), the one in Bethel, which was the most southern, and the other in Dan, which was the most northern part of the country, the better to suit the conveniency of all their votaries. The regular priests, however, would not comply with him in these idolatries; and therefore he inhibited them the exercise of their own religion, banished them his kingdom, seized on their possessions, and appointed ‡ any, who was so minded, to officiate about these new

† It was certainly a piece of great imprudence to send any one to treat with them when they were so highly exasperated; but to send him that was an obnoxious man, as having the principal care of the very tributes they complained of, was downright infatuation; because nothing is so natural as to hate those that are the instruments of our oppression, or any ways employed in it. *Patrick's Commentary.*

†² This is the first time that we read of a king's riding in a chariot. Saul, and David, and Solomon rode in none; but after the division of the kingdom, mention is frequently made of the use of them, both by the kings of Judah and Israel. *Patrick's Comment.*

†³ This prophet was very well known in the reign of Rehoboam: He is supposed to have wrote the annals of that prince; and of what authority he was in Judah we may gather from this passage, where he is said to have prevailed with the king and an hundred and fourscore thousand men to lay down their arms and return home, merely by declaring, that the division which had happened was by the order and appointment of God. *Calmet's Commentary.*

‡ The Hebrew words *miketzoth haam*, do properly signify *out of all the people*, and not *the lowest of the people*. This exposition Bochart has justified by a great many examples of the uses of these words in

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erected idols : By which means a great accession of strength accrued to Rehoboam's party ; for the priests that were banished resorted all to Jerusalem, and as many of the other tribes as had any regard to the true worship of God followed them.

To give the better countenance to his new invented religion, Jeroboam himself was accustomed sometimes to officiate ; and therefore, on a † solemn feast, which he had appointed at Bethel, as he stood by the altar for that purpose, a certain †² prophet, who came from Judah, foretold him, that that very altar which he had erected should one day be polluted and destroyed by a child born of the house of David, †³ whose name in future ages should be Josias ; and, for the proof of the truth of this prediction, he added, that immediately it should be split Incensed at this freedom of speech, Jeroboam stretched out his hand, and called to those that stood by to seize the prophet ; but as he stretched it out, his arm grew so stiff, that he could not pull it back again, and the altar, being split asunder, let the fire and the ashes that were thereon fall to the ground.

Jeroboam by this means was sensibly convinced of his impiety, and entreated the prophet to intercede with God for the restoration of his hand. The prophet in this particular complied with his request ; but when the king desired his company to dine with him, on purpose to make him a recompence for his miraculous cure, he declined the invitation, upon account of a positive Divine injunction, that he should make no stay in the place, not so much as to eat or drink in it, or †⁴ return by the same way.

other places : So that their meaning must be, not that Jeroboam employed the *refuse* of the people only, but that he employed *any*, though they were not of the tribe of Levi, though they had no previous qualifications to recommend them to officiate as priests about his idols. To employ the meanest of the people only in this office had been bad policy, and exposing his new institution to contempt ; but to admit any that offered themselves, of what rank or quality soever ; to lay open the priesthood, and destroy the needless distinction of men and things (as the modern phrase is), this had in it the air of free-thinking, and must therefore be a very grateful thing, and ingratiate himself, no doubt, with the people. *Patrick's Commentary.*

† As the Jews had their feast of tabernacles on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, so Jeroboam had a feast on the fifteenth day of the eighth month, which he instituted of his own accord. Some suppose indeed, that as this feast was appointed by God to be observed after the gathering in of the fruits, which might be sooner ripe in Jerusalem than in the northern parts of the country ; so Jeroboam might pretend, that the eighth month would be a better time for it than the seventh, because then they would every where be gathered. Others imagine, that he might have this farther design in the alteration of this month, viz. that the people of Judah, when their own feast was over a month before at Jerusalem, might have opportunity to come to his, if their curiosity led them. But the plain case is, that he did every thing he could in opposition to the established religion, and his chief intention was to alienate the people from Jerusalem. *Bedford's Scripture Chronology*, lib. vi. c. 2.

†² Who this prophet was, commentators are not agreed. The Jews would generally have it to have been Iddo ; but, unless we may suppose that what is here related fell out in the latter end of Jeroboam's

reign, Iddo could not be the person ; because Iddo was alive in the days of Abijah, son of Rehoboam, whereas the prophet here spoken of died, in a manner, as soon as he had delivered his prophecy. Others therefore have thought that this prophet who came to rebuke Jeroboam was Ahijah, the same who had foretold him his exaltation to the crown of Israel : But, besides that Ahijah was alive after the time that this prophet was slain, Ahijah was certainly a native of Shiloh, and lived in Shiloh, which is in the tribe of Ephraim, and part of Jeroboam's dominions ; whereas it is expressly said of this prophet, that he came from Judah : So that there is no foundation, so much as for a conjecture, what the name of this man of God was. *Patrick's* and *Calmet's* Commentaries.

†³ This is one of the most remarkable prophecies that we have in Sacred Writ. It foretels an action that exactly came to pass above three hundred and forty years afterwards. It describes the circumstances of the action, and specifies the very name of the person that was to do it ; and therefore every Jew, who lived in the time of its accomplishment, must have been convinced of the Divine authority of a religion founded upon such prophecies as this ; since none but God could foresee, and consequently none but God could foretel, events at such a distance. *Le Clerc's* and *Calmet's* Commentaries.

†⁴ Why this prophet was forbid to eat or drink with the people of Bethel, the reason is obvious, because he was to have no familiarity with idolaters ; but why he should not "return by the same way that he went," is not so very evident. There is a passage in Isaiah concerning Sennacherib, which helps (as some think) to elucidate this matter, where God tells him, that "he would return him back by the same way that he came," Isaiah xxxvii. 29, 34. i. e. he should return home without doing any thing : all his threats and all his great projects should have no effect against Jerusalem. And in like manner, when God com-

In the town of Bethel there lived an old prophet, who, when his sons came and told him what the man of God from Judah had done, † what had passed between him and the king, and what way he had taken in his return home, went in pursuit of him; and, under the pretence of a fresh revelation which he had had, countermanning the injunction which the other thought himself under, invited him to his house. After some small demur, the young prophet believed him, went with him, sat down to meat, and refreshed himself; but, in his return, he paid dear for his disobedience; for †² a lion met him and slew him, but, when it had so done, it neither tore his body nor meddled with his ass; which when the old prophet understood, he took and buried him in his own sepulchre, and gave his children in charge, that whenever he died they should lay him in a place contiguous to this prophet; because he was confident, that whatever he foretold concerning the altar of Bethel, and || that form of idolatry which Jeroboam had set up, would most certainly come to pass.

Not long after this, Abijah, the son of Jeroboam, a young †³ prince of promising hopes, fell sick; whereupon Jeroboam prevailed †⁴ with his queen to disguise herself in

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manded the prophet not to return by the same way, it was as much as if he had said, "See that thou be constant and stedfast in executing the charge committed to thee; let nothing hinder or divert thee, but take abundant care that thou do thy business effectually." But this construction is a little too much strained; nor can I see why we may not say, that God enjoined his prophet not to return by the same way, lest Jeroboam, or any other of the inhabitants of Bethel, either to satisfy their curiosity upon an occasion so uncommon, or to do him some mischief for his severe denunciations against their altar and way of worship, might send men after him to bring him back. *Calmet's* and *Le Clerc's* Commentaries.

† By this it appears, that these sons of the old prophet were present when Jeroboam stood at the altar, and therefore joined in that idolatrous worship, though their father did not, and yet was too timorous to reprove it. *Patrick's* Commentary.

†² Not far from Bethel there was a wood, out of which the two she bears came that destroyed two and forty children for mocking the prophet Elisha, 2 Kings ii. 24. And it is not unlikely, that out of the same wood came the lion which slew this prophet. *Patrick's* Commentary.

|| There is something particular in the expressions of the text: "The saying which he cried by the word of God, against the altar in Bethel, and against all the houses of the high places which are in the cities of Samaria, shall surely come to pass," 1 Kings xiii. 32. But how can they be called the cities of Samaria, when Samaria itself was not now built, nor had the separate kingdom of Jeroboam as yet obtained that name? But this only shews, that the author or compiler of these books of kings (whether it was Ezra or Jeremiah) lived long after the time of Jeroboam, and writes of things and places as they were in his own days. He knew full well, that Samaria was built by Omri fifty years after Jeroboam, since himself had given the account of its foundation; but he was minded to speak in the phrase then current, and to make himself intelligible to those that read him; and for this reason, no doubt, it is, that in 2 Kings xxiii. 18. the false prophet of Bethel

is said to have come from Samaria, though at that time there was no city of that name. *Calmet's* Commentary.

†³ In 1 Kings xiv. 13. it is said, that "in him there was found some good thing towards the Lord God of Israel." From whence the Jewish doctors have devised the story, that he broke down an hedge (it had better been a wall, I should think) which his father had made, to keep people from going up to Jerusalem at the three great feasts. But however this be, we may be permitted fairly to infer thus much from the words:—That he was the only person in the family who had expressed a dislike of the worshipping of calves, an inclination and intention to abolish it, whenever he should come into power, and to permit, if not oblige, his subjects to go up to Jerusalem, to worship accordingly as the law prescribed. *Pool's* Annot.

†⁴ Jeroboam might be for having his wife go to consult the prophet at Shiloh, because this was a secret not to be entrusted with any body else; a secret which, had it been divulged, might have endangered his whole government; because, if once his subjects came to understand that he himself had no confidence in the calves which he had set up, but, in any matter of importance, had recourse to the true worshippers of God, it is not to be imagined, what an inducement this would have been for them to forsake these senseless idols, and to return to the worship of the God of Israel, whom they imprudently had forsaken. The queen then was the only person he could have confidence in. As a mother, he knew that she would be diligent in her enquiry; and as a wife, faithful in her report; but there were sundry reasons why he might desire her to disguise herself. For though Shiloh lay within the confines of Ephraim, yet there is sufficient ground to think that it was subject to the house of David, and belonged to the kingdom of Judah. It was certainly nearer Jerusalem than Shechem, which Rehoboam had lately fortified, and made his place of residence: And therefore Jeroboam thought it not safe to venture his queen in a place that was under his rival's government, without her putting on some disguise. He knew too, that the prophet Abijah was greatly offended at him for the gross idolatry he had

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the dress of an ordinary woman; to go to the prophet Ahijah, who was then at Shiloh, and to enquire concerning the fate of the child. The prophet at that time was blind, and therefore they thought that they might very easily impose upon him; but before the queen came, God had discovered the whole matter to him, and therefore, as soon as she entered the door, he called her by her name, and then delivered the message which God had directed him to do. Therein he upbraided Jeroboam with ingratitude to God, who had made him king; charged him with impiety and apostacy in setting up images for the objects of religious worship; foretold the extirpation of his race, and the death of the child then sick; threatened sore judgments to the people of Israel, for their conforming to the idolatry which he had begun; and with this doleful message he sent her away, who, as soon as she entered the palace door (according to the prophet's prediction), found the child dying. But all these judgments and miraculous events wrought no reformation in wicked Jeroboam.

Nor was his rival, Rehoboam king of Judah much better. He, for three years indeed, kept up the true worship at Jerusalem, but it was more out of a principle of state policy than of true religion. For when the time of Jeroboam's subjects coming over to him upon that account was at an end, he threw off the mask, and discovered his inclination to idolatry; and as his example was followed by his subjects, they soon exceeded all that went before them. For they not only set up "images and groves upon every hill, and under every green tree," but, to add to their gross impiety, introduced the detestable † sin of Sodom, and all the other wickednesses that the ancient Canaanites were expelled for.

Under these provocations, it was not long before God sent against them Shishak, king of Egypt, who, in the fifth year of Rehoboam, †² invaded his dominions with a very numerous army; and having ravaged the country, taken most of the fortified places, and entered Jerusalem without opposition, plundered the temple and palace of their rich furniture and moveables, he took away all the money that was found in the king's treasure, and the treasure of the sanctuary, and, at the same time, carried off the golden shields which Solomon had made; in the room of which, Rehoboam, by this depredation, was reduced so low, that he †³ was forced to make brazen ones for the use and ornament of his guards.

introduced, and therefore he thought (as justly he might) that, if the prophet perceived her to be his wife, he would either tell her nothing, or make things much worse than they were. The only way therefore to come at the truth, was (as he thought) to do what he did. But herein appears his infatuation, that he should not think the person whom he held capable of resolving him in the fate of his son, able to see through this guile and disguise. *Calmet's Commentary*, and *Pool's Annotations*.

† There are several passages in Scripture, such as 1 Kings xv. 12. 2 Kings xxiii. 7. Rom. i. 26, 27, &c. from whence it appears, that this kind of wickedness did frequently attend idolatry. Among the heathen, the most filthy things were committed in their groves, those places of darkness and obscurity, by the worshippers of Venus, Bacchus, and Priapus; and when the Israelites fell into the same religion, they must, of course, have fallen into the same practices, because, whatever they did of this kind, was done in devotion and honour to their gods, who, as they imagined, were highly delighted with such obscenities. *Patrick's Commentary*.

†² It may seem something strange, that Shishak,

who was so nearly allied to Rehoboam, should come up against him, and take his royal city: But Rehoboam, we must remember, was not the son of Pharaoh's daughter, and therefore no relation to Shishak. But even had he been ever so nearly related, as kingdoms, we know, never marry, so it is likely that Jeroboam, who had lived long in Egypt, stirred him up to invade his rival, that thereby he might establish himself in his new kingdom: And for this reason it was, that, when the armies of Egypt had taken the fenced cities of Judah, they returned, without giving Jeroboam or his dominions any the least disturbance. *Patrick's Commentary*.

†³ This shews to what a low condition the kingdom of Judah was reduced. These shields were a matter of state and grandeur; and therefore it concerned them, if they were able, to have them of the same value that they were before: And, as they were carried before the king to the house of the Lord, it seemed likewise to be a matter of religion, that their value should not be diminished. Now, in making these three hundred shields, we are told that three pounds of gold went to one shield, 1 King x. 17. This, at four pounds per ounce, or forty-eight pounds sterling

We have little or nothing more recorded of Rehoboam, but that he reigned twelve years after this conquest and devastation by Shishak; that he had eighteen wives, and threescore concubines, and by them eight and twenty sons and threescore daughters; that most of these sons (who were grown to maturity in his lifetime) he made governors in chief of the fenced cities in his kingdom; that he appointed Abijah (who was the eldest by his favourite wife Maacah) to succeed him in his throne, and, || after a continued war with his rival Jeroboam, died in the fifty-eighth year of his age, in the seventeenth year of his reign, and was buried in the city of David.

From 1 Kings
viii. to the end
of 2 Chron.

Abijah, who succeeded his father in the kingdom of Judah in the eighteenth year of Jeroboam king of Israel, was a prince of an active and martial spirit; and therefore, resolving to put an end to the long dispute between the two kingdoms of Judah and Israel, he raised an army of four hundred thousand men, while Jeroboam, whose territories were of larger extent, had got together one of eight hundred thousand. This notwithstanding, Abijah determined to give him battle; but, before they came to the onset, he thought it not improper to get upon an eminence, and † to expostulate with the Israelitish army the injustice of their cause in revolting from his father Rehoboam; the right he claimed on his side, since God had given the whole kingdom to David and his sons for ever; and the reasonable expectance he had of the Divine assistance in what he was going about, since the religion of Jeroboam was false and idolatrous, whereas he, and the men of Judah, had the pure worship of the living God, his temple, and his ordinances among them.

Jeroboam was no ways solicitous to answer him in those points; but while he continued speaking, ordered a detachment to march round, and intercept his retreat: Which, when the men of Judah perceived, they addressed themselves to God in prayer for success, and, while the priests blew the trumpets, the soldiers gave a great shout, and charged the Israelites so vigorously, that they soon gave way, and (as the enemy gave no quarter) lost in the whole action no less than five hundred thousand men, the greatest slaughter that was ever heard of.

This victory Abijah took care to improve by pursuing Jeroboam, and taking from him so many strong cities, (among which Bethel, where one of the golden calves had lately been set up, was one) that he was never thenceforward able to make head against his adversary, who, by this and some other successful achievements, grew great and powerful. But his reign was but short; he reigned not quite three years before he died, and was buried in the city of David: and the reason that some have assigned for God's thus shortening of his days, was—his not destroying idolatry when, by taking of Bethel, he had it in his power. For, however he might plead his possession of the

to the pound, amounts to no more than 43,200 l. and therefore it was a miserable case, that they were reduced from so much wealth to so much poverty, that neither reasons of state, nor religion, could raise so small a sum on so great an occasion. *Bedford's Scripture Chronology*, lib. vi. c. 2.

|| But how does this agree with what we read in 1 Kings xii. 23, &c. viz. that God commanded Rehoboam and his people not to fight against the Israelites, and they obeyed? Very well, if we will but observe, that, though the Jews were commanded not to make war upon the Israelites, yet they were not commanded not to defend themselves, in case the Israelites should make war upon them; and, considering that they were now become two rival nations, they might, upon the borders, be continually endeavouring to gain ground upon each other, and so run into frequent acts of hostility, without ever once enga-

ging in a pitched battle. *Patrick's Commentary*.

† None of the great captains and commanders, whose speeches are recorded in heathen authors, ever expressed themselves more movingly than this king of Judah did. But some have found fault with him for speaking not so honourably of his father's military skill and courage, which he might as well have omitted, because (allowing it to be true) he seems to have served no purpose in mentioning it: But this notwithstanding, the speech is very lively, and excellently well calculated to cause a revolt in Jeroboam's army. Josephus, who was no mean orator, and who in some speeches has improved upon the sacred historian, is quite out-done and surpassed in this, insomuch, that there is no room to introduce him, unless it be by way of foil to the original. *Patrick's Commentary*. Vid. the speech at large in 2 Chron. xiii. 4, &c.

A. M. 3001,
&c. or 4421.
Ant. Chris.
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or 990.

temple and priesthood, to make his argument good against Jeroboam, yet the character which the sacred historian gives him, is,—(a) “that he walked in all the sins of his father; nor was his heart perfect with the Lord his God, as the heart of his great grandfather David.”

Asa, however, who, in the twentieth year of Jeroboam king of Israel, succeeded his father in the throne of Judah, was a prince of a different temper. As he enjoyed the felicity of a settled peace for the ten first years of his reign, he wisely made use of it, in reforming many abuses that had been tolerated in former reigns. He expelled the Sodomites, broke down the idols, and demolished their altars in all the cities of Judah; || but he had not yet power and authority enough to destroy the high places. The vessels of silver and gold, which † both he and his father had consecrated to the service of the temple, he presented to the priests; and, by all the enforcements of regal authority, compelled his subjects to be religious.

This time of peace he likewise made use of to fortify several cities on the frontier parts of his kingdom, and to train up his subjects in the art of war; insomuch, that in a short time he had an army of three hundred thousand men of Judah, armed with shields and pikes, and two hundred and fourscore thousand men of Benjamin, armed with shields and arrows, all persons of courage, and resolved to defend their country.

In this situation of affairs, Zerah, the ‡ king of Arabia (Ethiopia) invaded Judea with an almost innumerable army, but was vanquished by Asa with a much inferior force:

(a) 1 Kings xv. 3.

|| This seems to be contradicted by a passage in 2 Chron. xiv. 3. where we are told, “that Asa took away the altars of the strange gods, and the high places:” But for the right understanding and reconciling of this, we may observe, that there were two kinds of high places, the one tolerated for religious purposes, the other abominable from their first institution; the one frequented by devout worshippers, the other made the receptacle of the wicked and idolatrous only. Now these were the altars and high places which Asa took away, even where the people sacrificed to strange gods; but those where God alone was worshipped, had obtained so long, and were looked upon with so sacred a veneration, that, for fear of giving a general offence, (though he knew they were contrary to a Divine injunction) he durst not adventure to abolish them. The truth is, these high places were famous either for the apparition of angels, or some other miraculous event; had either been places of abode for the ark of the Lord, or such as some prophet or patriarch of old had been accustomed to pray and sacrifice in; and therefore they were looked upon as consecrated to the service of God; nor was there strength enough in the government to overcome this inveterate prejudice, till Hezekiah arose, who (to prevent the calamities that were coming upon the nation) had the courage to effect a thorough reformation. *Patrick* on 1 Kings xv. 14. and *Calmet* on chap. xiv. 23.

† According to the piety of ancient times, his father had devoted some part of the spoils he had taken in the war against Jeroboam to the service of the temple, but had not time to make good his vow, or, upon some account or other, had neglected it, so that his son took care to supply that defect. And, forasmuch as himself had taken large booty in his war with

the Arabians, of this he likewise bestowed a considerable part upon holy uses. *Patrick's Commentary.*

‡ The Scripture takes no notice of what was the cause of this war between Zerah and Asa, nor are interpreters well agreed what the country was from whence this enemy came. The country in the original is called *Cush*, though we translate it *Ethiopia*. Now there are three countries, different from one another, all called by the name of *Cush*: 1. The land of *Cush* upon the river *Gihon*; 2. *Cush* upon the eastern shore of the Red Sea; and, 3. *Cush* situate above *Thebais*, and in the upper Egypt. It is very probable then, that the country here spoken of must not be *Ethiopia*, properly so called, because we can hardly imagine how an army of a million of men should be permitted to march through Egypt (as they must have done to invade Judea) without some opposition: and therefore the country must be that land of *Cush* which lay in Arabia *Petræa*, upon the east shore of the Red Sea, and, at the extremity to the point of that sea, inclining towards Egypt and Judea. And whereas some have made it a doubt how so small a country could have produced so large an army, it is no hard matter to suppose, that a great part of the army might perhaps have been mercenaries. [Dr Hales, however, is of opinion, that Zerah was king of the *African Ethiopia*, now long known by the name of *Abyssinia*, and that his immense army consisted of *Abyssinians* and *Lybians*, called in the Scripture *Lubim*. This opinion seems to be well founded, as an army might have been raised in *Abyssinia*, and marched into Judea without passing through Egypt.] *Calmet's Commentary* on 2 Chron. xiv. 9. and Dictionary, under the word *Cush*. *Wells's Geography* of the Old Testament, vol. i. ch. iv. and *Hales's Analysis*, vol. ii. p. 415.

for as soon as the battle began, God struck the Arabians with such a panic fear, that they began to flee; and Asa and his army pursued them, took the spoil of their camp, carried away their cattle, smote the cities that were in league with them, and so returned in triumph to Jerusalem. From 1 Kings viii. to the end of 2 Chron.

After so signal a victory, Asa continued in peace for the space of five years more; in which time he thought himself obliged, both in gratitude to God and in compliance to the encouragement (a) which his prophet Azariah had given him, to set himself about a thorough reformation in religion. To this purpose he executed all that could be convicted of sodomy: he destroyed all the idols that were to be found, not only in Judah and Benjamin, but in any of the conquered countries likewise: he repaired the altar of burnt-offerings, and summoned not only natives but strangers likewise to the worship of the true God. On a solemn festival which he had appointed, he ordered seven hundred oxen, and seven thousand sheep, part of the spoil which he had taken from the Arabians, to be sacrificed; and, at the same time, engaged in a covenant with his subjects, (which was confirmed by oath) that whoever should forsake the true worship of God, should have (b) the sentence of the law executed upon him, and be infallibly put to death.

His own mother had been a patroness of idolatry; and therefore, to shew his impartiality, he removed her from court, and forbade her coming near the queen for fear of infecting her; and understanding that she had set up an idol in a grove consecrated to an obscene deity *, he burnt the idol and the grove both, and threw their ashes into the brook Kidron, (c) as Moses did before by the molten calf.

(a) 2 Chron. xv. throughout.

(b) Deut. xvii. 2, &c.

* The words of the text, both in 1 Kings xv. 13. and 2 Chron. xv. 16. according to our translation, are to this effect:—"That Asa removed his mother Maachah from being queen, because she had made an idol in a grove, both of which he cut down and burnt." The word which we render *Idol*, is in the original *Mipheletseth*; but then the whole difficulty turns upon this,—what the proper signification of this word is. The Vulgate translation has cleared this matter pretty well, by rendering the passage, that this queen-mother "was the high priestess in the sacrifices of Priapus;" and when the Septuagint (according to the Vatican copy) informs us, that she held an assembly in this grove, and that her son Asa cut down all the close arbours, or places of retreat, as the word *Σύναδος*, which we render *assembly*, may have a more carnal meaning, and the other *Καλύδου*, properly signifies *hiding-places*, or *places of retirement for wicked and obscene purposes*; we may from hence infer, that both the Latin and Greek translators took the *Mipheletseth* of Maachah to be some lewd and lascivious deity, which loved to be worshipped in filthy and abominable actions; and that this could be no other than the Roman Priapus (whose worshippers were chiefly women) seems to be implied in the very etymology of the word, which properly signifies *Terriculamentum*, or a device to frighten other things away; for this was exactly the office of Priapus in all gardens.

Pomosisque ruber custos ponatur in hortis,

Terreat ut sævâ falce Priapus aves.

Tibul. Eleg. i.

But then the question is, who the patriarch was (for most idols were made for some patriarch or other)

that the Roman Priapus is thought to represent? And the learned author (from whom I have compiled this note) is of opinion, that it might properly enough denote Lot, who lay with his two daughters when he was drunk, and of the former begat Moab, the progenitor of that nation, who were the greatest worshippers of this obscene deity: though for several reasons that he there enumerates, (upon presumption that Priapus was the same with *Baal-Pehor*, which signifies a *naked or uncovered god*) he is more inclinable to think it was Noah, of whom it is said, that "he was an husbandman, and planted a vineyard, and that he drank of the wine, and was drunken, and uncovered within his tent," Gen. ix. 20, 21. *Jurieu Hist. des Dogmes et Cult. part. iv. c. 2. et 3.* Most of the ancients are of opinion, that Astoreth, which all allow to be the same with Astarte, was the Greek *Κύπρις*, and the Roman Venus. Tully, in his third book de *Natura Deorum*, tells us expressly, that Astarte, among the Tyrians, was the fourth Venus, who was married to Adonis, and upon his and some other authorities, many moderns have gone into the same sentiment; but as it is certain that the Tyrians had their theology from the Phœnicians, the testimony of St Austin cannot but have some weight in this case, since he affirms, with the greatest assurance, that Juno, without all doubt, was, by the Carthaginians, called Astarte. Quæst. 26. in indices. That Juno was the great deity and patroness of Carthage, is the received opinion of the Gentile world.

Quam Juno fertur terris magis omnibus unam

Posthabitâ coluisse Samo, &c.

Virg. Æn. 1.

And therefore, since we find Baal, who is the same with Jupiter, so frequently in Scripture joined with

(c) Exod. xxxii. 20.

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The fame of this reformation, and the blessings wherewith God had hitherto distinguished Asa's reign, made the subjects of Baasha (who was now king of Israel) come over in great numbers to Jerusalem; which Baasha perceiving, was resolved, if possible, to put a stop to it; and therefore he fortified Ramah, a town in the tribe of Benjamin, so conveniently situated, that by keeping a good garrison there, he might hinder all passing to and fro without leave, and so cut off all communication between his people and the people of Judah.

Asa hearing of this, and knowing the intent and purpose of the stratagem, was resolved to give him a diversion, if he possibly could, on the other side. To this end he took all the † silver and gold that was in the temple, as well as what was found in his own exchequer, and sent it as a present to Benhadad, king of Syria, requesting his assistance against Baasha. The largeness of the present soon had its effect; for Benhadad immediately attacked several cities in Israel with such success, that Baasha was forced to abandon his new design of fortifying his frontiers towards Judah, in order to defend the other parts of his kingdom that were thus furiously invaded; which gave Asa an opportunity to demolish the works that were begun at Ramah, and with the materials that Baasha had prepared to build him two cities in his own dominions, Gebah and Mispah.

This applying however to Benhadad for assistance was, in Asa, a thing inexcusable. It implied a distrust of God's power and goodness to help him, of which he had so lately so large an experience, and therefore the prophet Hanani was sent to reprove him for it: But instead of receiving his reproofs with temper and thankfulness, he was so exasperated with them, that he put the prophet in chains, and gave orders, at the same time, for the execution * of several of his subjects.

The truth is, towards the close of his reign, he grew very peevish and passionate, and uneasy with those that were about him; which, charity would be apt to think, proceeded from his distemper, a severe gout (in all probability), whose humour rising upwards, killed him in the one and fortieth year of his reign. He was succeeded by his son Jehoshaphat. But instead of being interred (as the manner of the Jews was), †² he

Ashtaroth, which is the same with Astarte, we can hardly refrain thinking, that she must be the Roman Juno, and they consequently husband and wife. How extravagant soever therefore the frolic of Heliogabalus was, in sending for the goddess of the Carthaginians to be married to his god, who was the Jupiter of the Phœnicians; yet from this piece of history we may inform ourselves, that the goddess of the Carthaginians was no other than Juno, the supposed wife of Baal, or Jupiter; and therefore we find her, by the Phœnician historian Sanchoniatho, called Baaltis, which is a feminine substantive, formed from the word Baal, and by the sacred writers the queen of heaven, Jer. vii. 18. and xlv. 18. We have sufficient grounds therefore to suppose, that this Astarte was Juno; but then what particular woman this Juno was, before she came to be deified, we are at a loss to know: Only the conjecture of the learned author (from whom I have extracted this note) seems to be preferable to any other I have yet met with, viz. that as both Baal and Jupiter are generally allowed to be the patriarch Ham, so this Juno or Astarte, in all probability, was one of his wives, from whom the Canaanites and Phœnicians were descended. But in this we have the less certainty, because the Sacred History says nothing of the adventures of the postdiluvian matrons, whereby we might be enabled to form a comparison between

them and these fabulous goddesses. *Jurieu Hist. des Dogmes et Cult. part iv. c. 5.*

† In cases of extreme danger, it was always held lawful to employ sacred things in the defence of one's country: But there was no such necessity in this case. God had appeared wonderful in Asa's defence against an enemy much more powerful than Baasha was; nay, he had promised him his protection at all times, and success in all his undertakings, if he would but adhere to his service; and yet, forgetting all this, he strips the temple of its treasure, and bribes a heathen prince to come to his assistance, and break his league with another, to whom he stood engaged: So that here were three offences in this one act of Asa's. For, 1st, he alienated things consecrated to God without necessity; 2dly, he did this out of a carnal fear, and distrust of that God, whose power and goodness he had lately experienced; and, 3dly, he did it with an ill intent, even to hire Benhadad to a breach of his league and covenant with Baasha. *Pool's Annotations.*

* [It is not said that he gave orders for the execution of his subjects, but that he oppressed them, or became a tyrant.]

†² The words in the text are these,—“They laid him on the bed, which was filled with sweet odours, and divers kinds of spices prepared by the apothecary-

ordered his body to be burnt, with great quantities of perfumes and spices, and his bones and ashes to be collected, and buried in a sepulchre, which he had provided for himself in the city of David.

From 1 Kings
viii. to the end
of 2 Chron.

During the long continuance of Asa's reign, sundry successions and revolutions happened in the kingdom of Israel, whereof the Sacred History has given us but a short account. In the first or second year of Asa died Jeroboam, of some acute disease, which the Scripture does not specify. His reign was famous (or infamous rather) for the revolt of the ten tribes, the public institution of idolatry, and the terrible defeat which Abijah gave him, and which he himself seems not long to have survived. He was succeeded by his son Nadab, a person who took care to imitate his father in all his wickedness; but his reign was not long. In less than two years he was treacherously killed by Baasha, his captain-general, who usurped his crown, and to maintain himself in that usurpation, put every one that was related to his predecessor to death; which was certainly a very wicked and barbarous act, though it proved the accomplishment of the prophecy † which Ahijah had denounced against Jeroboam's house.

|| In the six and twentieth year of king Asa, Baasha died, and was succeeded by his son Elah, a vicious and debauched prince, that in the second year of his reign (as he was carousing in his steward's house) was assassinated by Zimri, a considerable officer

ries art; and they made a great burning for him," 2 Chron. xvi. 14. But then the question is, whether the body itself was burnt, or only some spices and odoriferous drugs, to prevent any bad smell that might attend the corpse? The Greeks and Romans indeed, when they burnt any dead bodies, threw frankincense, myrrh, cassia, and other fragrant things into the fire, and this in such abundance, that Pliny (Nat. Hist. cap. 18.) represents it as a piece of profaneness to bestow such heaps of frankincense upon a dead body, when they offered it so sparingly to their gods. The Jews, however, (say the maintainers of this side of the question) were accustomed to inter, and not burn their dead, though they might possibly learn from the Egyptians the usage of burning many spices at their funerals, as we find they did at the funeral of Zedekiah king of Judah, Jer. xxxiv. 5. but, notwithstanding this, some very able commentators are of opinion, that all these spices and perfumes were burnt along with Asa's body; and they remark, that among his other offences, the sacred history takes notice of this vanity of his, in ordering his body to be disposed of according to the manner of the Gentiles, and not of his own people. Though therefore they suppose that Asa was the first who introduced this custom, yet, in after-ages, it became very frequent, and was thought the more honourable ceremony of the two, 2 Chron. xxi. 19. Ibid. xvi. 14. Amos vi. 10.; *Patrick's* and *Cabnet's* Commentary on 2 Chron. xvi. 14.

† The denunciation is expressed in these words,— "Therefore behold, I will bring evil upon the house of Jeroboam, and will cut off from Jeroboam him that pisseth against the wall, and him that is shut up and left in Israel, and will take away the remnant of the house of Jeroboam, as a man taketh away dung, till it be all gone. Him that dieth of Jeroboam in the city shall the dogs eat; and him that dieth in the field, shall the fowls of the air eat; for the Lord hath spoken it." (1 Kings xiv. 10, 11.) The only difficulty in which words is, how Baasha's exaltation to

the kingdom of Israel can be ascribed to God, (as it is 1 Kings xvi. 2.) when it is manifest that he got it by his own treachery and cruelty. But to this may be replied, that though the manner of invading the kingdom was from himself, and his own wicked heart, yet the translation of the kingdom from Nadab to Baasha (simply considered) was from God, who by his decree and Providence ordered it, and disposed of all occasions, and of the hearts of all the soldiers and the people so, that Baasha should have opportunity of executing his judgments upon Nadab, and such success thereupon, as should procure him a present and quiet possession of the kingdom. So that his accession to the kingdom was from the Divine decree, but the form and manner of his accession was from himself, from his own ambition and covetousness; and, as it was wicked and cruel, is therefore charged upon him as a wilful murder. Ver. 7. *Pool's* Annotations.

|| And yet Baasha's expedition against Asa, in order to build Ramah, is said to be in the six and thirtieth year of the reign of Asa, 2 Chron. xvi. 1. Now to reconcile this, some would have that six and thirtieth year to relate, not to Asa's reign, but to the date of the kingdom of Judah from the division of the kingdom of Israel, at Rehoboam's coming to the crown, and to be (in fact) no more than the fourteenth year of the reign of Asa. But that cannot be, since this expedition of Baasha was some time after Asa had defeated the king of Ethiopia, or Arabia, and yet this defeat happened in the fifteenth year of king Asa's reign: so that that six and thirtieth year of Baasha's going up to build Ramah, can by no good computation be the fourteenth year of king Asa's reign. And therefore (without any more to do) we may, with Josephus and others, adventure to say, that the occasion of this difference proceeds from the mistake of some transcriber. *Howell's* History, in the Notes. See, however, Dissertation V. at the end of this Book.

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of horse, who, to secure the kingdom to himself, † cut off all Baasha's friends and relations: but he had not taken care (as Baasha did) to gain the army (which was then besieging †² Gibbethon) over to his interest; so that when they heard of the news of the king's death, they declared for Omri their general. He immediately raised the siege, and marching to Tirzah, the then royal city, soon made himself master of it; so that Zimri, seeing all lost, and despairing of any quarter from the enemy, retired to the palace †³, which he set on fire, and, after a reign of seven days only, was consumed in it.

Omri, however, found it not so easy a matter to get the throne as he expected. Half the Israelites declared for Tibni the son of Ginah, which occasioned a civil war for four years, * till having vanquished and slain his rival Tibni, he came to reign without a competitor. But his reign must be acknowledged to have been very wicked, when we find it recorded of him, that he not only walked in the way of Jeroboam, (a) but did worse than all before him. He very probably began to introduce other and more abominable idolatries than were then in use, which are therefore called (b) the works of the house of Ahab. He compelled the people to worship the golden calves; and by severe laws (which are called (c) the statutes of Omri) restrained them from going up to Jerusalem; and because the royal palace at Tirzah was destroyed, he bought of one Shemer a piece of rising ground, whereon he built a palace for his own habitation, which in a short time increasing to a city, was from its first owner called in Hebrew *Shomeron*, but according to the Greeks, and our translation, * Samaria, and was ever after made a place of the king's residence, and the metropolis of the Israelitish kingdom.

In the eight and thirtieth year of King Asa, Ahab succeeded his father Omri, and in wickedness excelled all his predecessors. But of him we shall treat at large in our next chapter, and chuse to conclude here with this observation,—that though, while Asa reigned in Judah, Israel was in the hands of seven or eight several princes, viz. Jeroboam, Nadab, Baasha, Elah, Zimri, Tibni, Omri, and Ahab; yet such was their hardness in sin and idolatry, that in all these changes they never once thought of re turning to the house of David, or the worship of the true God at Jerusalem.

† One part of the threat, which the prophet Jehu denounces against Baasha, is, as we see, that God would "make his house like the house of Jeroboam," 1 Kings xvi. 3.; and that exactly came to pass: For, as Nadab the son of Jeroboam reigned but two years, so Elah the son of Baasha reigned no more: and as Nadab was killed by the sword, so was Elah: so wonderful a similitude was there between Jeroboam and Baasha, in their lives and in their deaths, in their sons and in their families. *Patrick's Commentary.*

†² This was a city in the tribe of Dan, and given to the Levites for their habitation, Josh. xix. 44. and xxi. 23. but they seem to have quitted it, as they did the rest of the cities, when Jeroboam would not suffer them to exercise their office, and the Philistines, it is likely, then seized upon it, as being adjoining to their country. It seems however, to have been a place of no inconsiderable strength, since we find, that it maintained a siege for three kings reigns successively, though with some interruption, 1 Kings xvi. 15. 16.

†³ Some interpreters would rather have it, that Omri set the royal palace on fire, in order to burn Zimri in it, who had retired thither. The Hebrew words indeed will bear that construction, but the other sense seems more likely. Nor has profane history forgot to preserve the memory of some princes who have chosen to die in this manner, rather than fall by the sword, whereof Sardanapalus is one of the

most ancient, and most notorious examples. *Calmet's Commentary.*

* [According to Dr Hales for six years.]

(a) 1 Kings xvi. 25.

(b) Micah vi. 16.

(c) Ibid.

* It is somewhat wonderful, that when Omri bought this place of Shemer, whereon he intended to build a city, he did not call it by his own name, unless we may suppose, that when Shemer sold it, he let him have the greater bargain of it, upon condition that it should be continued in its first owner's name. However this be, it is certain, that as Samaria was situated in the midst of the tribe of Ephraim on a fruitful and pleasant hill, it soon became the regal and capital city of the kingdom of Israel; nor did its kings omit any thing to make it as strong, as fine, and as rich as possible. What fate it underwent by Benhadad king of Syria; by Sahlmanezzer king of Assyria; and by one of the Maccabean family; by Herod the Great, who rebuilt and beautified it; by Augustus Cæsar, and by the emperor Adrian, under whom it finally fell; we shall see, in a great measure, in the course of this history. It is conjectured by Bochart, (who traced the ruins of it,) to have been once larger than Jerusalem; but now it consists of nothing but a few cottages and convents, inhabited by some Greek monks. *Wells's Geography of the Old Testament*, vol. 3.

THE OBJECTION.

“**JEROBOAM**, no doubt, was a very politic man; and the division which he brought about in the Jewish monarchy was a matter of no small contrivance: But still his setting up calves, as objects of Divine worship, in order to keep his people at home, and to prevent their returning to the house of David and the temple of Jerusalem, was the most senseless and absurd project that ever entered into any wise man’s head. The temple of Jerusalem had not, at this time, been finished above thirty years, and persons enough there were alive who had been eye-witnesses at its dedication, of the glory of the Lord, which not only filled the sanctuary, but the very courts adjoining, (a) ‘so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud.’ And how could he then think of making these people believe, that the image of a calf was equally a symbol of the Divine presence? How indeed could they but think that the king was making a parcel of dupes of them, when, upon the erection of these dumb idols, he could have the confidence to tell them, (b) ‘Behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee out of Egypt!’”

From 1 Kings
viii. to the end
of 2 Chron.

Israel had already suffered too much by a dangerous practice of this kind. The sin of the molten calf had cost their forefathers no less (c) than three thousand lives; and in every calamity that befel their posterity, some grains of this wicked idol they always thought were mingled in it. And can we imagine that they would so easily be inveigled into the like abomination again; that they would make so quick a transition from the worship of the true God to the grossest idolatry, and not rather look upon Jeroboam as their mortal enemy, that was going to bring upon them some heavy judgment, by attempting to introduce a thing which, when they considered the fate of their ancestors, was enough to make them tremble?

Had he done indeed as † Sanballat, we find, in after-times did, built an handsome temple in some commodious place, and taken in priests and Levites to officiate therein, this might have been some temptation for the people to stay with him; but, instead of this, to have recourse to that old invention, for which their forefathers had smarted so severely, was a practice so absurd, so unpopular, so dangerous, so odious, so sure to give disgust, and so apt to raise a general revolt, that Jeroboam must certainly have been a man too wise and politic ever to attempt it.

For the same reason we can hardly credit the story of Pharaoh’s taking cities from the Philistines, and giving them to Solomon, as part of his daughter’s portion. This king of Egypt (be he who he will) might possibly be a warlike prince; but the country of the Philistines (and Gezer in particular) lay so far distant from him, and so little deserved any military expedition, that we cannot but think that there is some

(a) 1 Kings viii. 11. (b) Ibid. xii. 28.

(c) Exod. xxxii. 28.

† This Sanballat was a native of Horon, or Horonaim, a city beyond Jordan, in the country of the Moabites, and by Darius made governor of the Cuthites or Samaritans. He had a daughter married to a son of the high priest Joiada, whom Josephus calls Manasseh; but when Nehemiah began his reformation, wherein he obliged all that had taken strange wives, either to dismiss them immediately, or to de-

part the country, Manasseh, with some others that were in the same circumstances, fled to Samaria, and there settled under the protection of Sanballat, who obtained leave (of Alexander, says Josephus, but our learned Prideaux makes it of Darius) to build on Mount Gerizim, near Samaria, a temple in imitation of that at Jerusalem, whereof he made his son-in-law Manasseh high priest. But of this we shall have occasion, in the course of this history, to treat more at large.

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&c. or 4421.
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mistake in the sacred account, as to the person that was the aggressor ; especially considering, that there is a palpable error in the supposed result of this expedition, which was the bestowing the conquered cities as a portion for Pharaoh's daughter ; whereas it was a known custom in those days for women to have no dower, but whoever espoused them was to purchase them of their parents.

Pharaoh might do this in gallantry perhaps, because his daughter was going to be married to a prince of Solomon's high renown ; but it looks as if his esteem for that alliance soon abated, when we find him making his country a common refuge for all Solomon's discontented subjects, and even not refusing protection to his most inveterate enemy, Jeroboam. Strange it is, indeed, that Solomon should have so little interest in the Egyptian court, as not to be able to prevail with the king, who was his father-in-law, to deny his protection to such persons as were conspiring the subversion of his government !

But the strangest story of all is, the queen of Sheba's coming to visit Solomon, and bringing with her a bundle of enigmas and riddles for this prodigious prince to resolve. For, supposing the woman imprudent enough to leave her kingdom (which is seldom safely done) merely to gratify a petulant curiosity, yet can we think that Solomon, who studied so hard as to become a perfect master of almost all the learned sciences, (for so the Scripture represents him, 1 Kings iv.), should have nothing else to do but to answer every impertinent woman that came with her quibbles and questions to him ? The historian however has taken care that we should not detect the fallacy of this remarkable adventure, by concealing the age, the religion, and the very country where this romantic lady lived.

Solomon, no doubt, was a very wise man, and yet we cannot but think that he laid the foundation for his own unhappiness as well as impiety, when he multiplied wives to such a prodigious degree ; for it is hard to conceive to what use and purpose such a number of them should serve, unless it were to scold and quarrel, and put the whole house in an uproar : And, though it must be owned that he is one of the top characters of the Sacred history, yet we cannot but wonder why he is so far neglected at last as to be dropt, all on a sudden, without any the least intimations of his repentance or non-repentance, of the happiness or misery of his future state ; which, considering the odd mixture of the man, and a life so egregiously chequered with good and evil (as his was), must not have failed of giving great satisfaction to every pious reader.

Whatever wild enthusiasts may think, the Spirit of God, in our opinion, never takes possession of fools ; and yet how shall we account for that humour of the prophet Ahijah, in tearing his coat (and his best coat too) into twelve pieces when he came to deliver his message to Jeroboam ? Whatever energy may be pretended in this emblamatical action, for our hearts we cannot but think that the business might have been expressed in words at length, and the man obtained a favourable audience and attention to what he had to say as well without it ; for (according to our sentiments of things) to see any one, at our first salutation, fall a tearing and rending his clothes to rags, would make us turn from him as a madman, rather than listen to him as a prophet.

But whatever may become of the conduct of this prophet, our study must be to preserve the attributes of God inviolate ; and yet they seem to be in apparent danger, if, after a most signal manner, (a) God should destroy a true prophet, merely for suffering himself to be persuaded by another prophet, who pretended equally to a Divine revelation, and came to ask nothing of him but what he might reasonably have expected. For might not the prophet from Judah (as he found himself hungry and weary) be apt to think, that God, in compassion to him, had revoked his prohibition, and now, that he had executed the main part of his charge, allowed him the liberty of refreshing himself ?

This the old prophet affirms, and affirms that he had it from an angel; and therefore, if there was any iniquity in the thing, on him should the punishment have fallen: And yet he is acquitted, or at least no harm lights upon him, whilst the other, that is innocently deceived, falls a prey to a lion, and (a) 'his carcase does not come into the sepulchres of his fathers.' From 1 Kings viii. to the end of 2 Chron.

THE Jewish doctors have a tradition, that after Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, had left Shechem in haste, and made the best of his way to Jerusalem, Jeroboam called a council, consisting partly of pious and partly of wicked men; that, in this council, he proposed whether they would agree and subscribe to all that he should appoint; that to this they declared their assent, and he thereupon constituted himself king; that when he proposed farther, whether, if he should establish idolatry, they would agree and consent to it, the pious party were shocked, and began to express their indignation; but that their wicked neighbours in the council pacified them, by whispering in their ears, "That Jeroboam had no intention to set up idolatry, but only mentioned it in a comparative sense, and with a design to try the extent of their obedience;" so that, by this fraud, the pious people in the council were drawn in, and even Ahijah himself prevailed on to subscribe implicitly to whatever Jeroboam should think fit to enact; by which means he took an occasion (as the iniquity of the times favoured him not a little) to establish idolatry by a law. ANSWER.

Solomon, we all agree, was a man of great fame for his knowledge, and yet, in the very maturity of his age, he discovered a strong inclination to idolatry, which could not but make a bad impression upon the minds of his subjects, when they saw the preference that was given to it by so wise a prince. His son Rehoboam was the issue of a woman that sprung from an infamous nation, an Ammonitess by birth, who (as far as it appears) was never a proselyte; and, having a great hand in her son's education, might give him a deep tincture of her own sentiments: For in his reign we read, that (b) "the people built them high places, on every high hill, and under every green tree, and did according to all the abominations of the nations which the Lord cast out before the children of Israel;" which they durst not have done had the king discountenanced them by his own example.

After a succession of such idolatrous princes, in the reign of king Josiah, (c) "the book of the law was found in the house of the Lord," at which Hilkiah, the high priest, seemed to express an uncommon joy and wonder: And though this might possibly be the authentic copy, (d) which, by God's command, was laid up in the sanctuary, yet how much the reading of it in any copy was at any time disused, we may gather from what the historian tells us of the king, viz. that (e) "when he had read the words of the book of the law, he rent his clothes;" and by parity of reason we may infer, that, what through the bad example of their kings, who gave life and encouragement to idolatrous practices, and what through the negligence of the people, in not perusing the books wherein the transactions of former times were recorded, the generation we are now speaking of might have forgot the history of Aaron's molten calf, and the punishment pursuant thereupon, and might therefore be induced to worship another without any dread or apprehensions of danger.

How the figure of a calf, or any other animal, can be a symbol of a deity, it is difficult to conceive. But a certain (f) learned author, who seems a little singular in his opinion, will needs have it, that the golden calves which Jeroboam made, were in imitation of the cherubims (in his account these were winged oxen) Moses had placed upon the ark of the covenant, whereon the glory of the Lord sat enthroned. These cherubims,

(a) 1 Kings xiii. 22.

(b) 1 Kings xiv. 23, 24.

(c) 2 Kings xxii. 8.

(d) Deut. xxxi. 26.

(e) 2 Kings xxii. 11.

(f) *Monsæus*, in *Aarone purgato*, lib. i. c. 8.

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&c. or 4421.
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1003, &c.
or 990.

in the tabernacle of Moses, and afterwards in Solomon's temple, were placed in the sanctuary, and secreted from vulgar sight. But Jeroboam, to make his religion more condescensive, placed his calves in open view, so that every one who looked on them might, through them, worship the God of Israel, without repairing to the temple of Jerusalem.

This notion, if it were true, would make the transition easy from the worship at Jerusalem to the worship at Dan or Bethel; but we can hardly imagine, that Jeroboam had either so harmless or so conformable a design in setting up these golden images. Whatever his design was, it is certain, that the Scripture all along represents him as, of all others, the principal person that (a) "made Israel to sin;" that (b) "drew Israel from serving the Lord, and made them sin a great sin." And therefore we may observe, that whenever it describes a bad prince, one part of his character is, that he imitated the sin of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, (c) "who (as the prophet upbraids his wife) went and made him other gods, and molten images, to provoke me to anger, and to cast me behind his back, saith the Lord."

The truth is, Jeroboam had lived a considerable time in the land of Egypt, had contracted an acquaintance with the king thereof, and formed an interest among the people; and therefore, finding himself under a necessity of making an alteration in the established religion of his country, he thought it the wisest method to do it upon the Egyptian model, that thereby he might endear himself to that nation, and, in case he met with opposition from his rival Rehoboam, might hope for assistance from that quarter. For, as the Egyptians had two oxen which they worshipped, one called Apis, at Memphis, the metropolis of the Upper Egypt; and another called Mnevis, at Hierapolis, a principal city of the Lower; so he made two calves of gold, and placed one of them in Bethel, which was in the south, and the other in Dan, which was in the north part of the country of Israel.

There were these farther reasons, likewise, that might determine him in the choice of these two places. Dan was a town famous (d) for the teraphim of Micah, unto which there had been a great resort for many ages; and Bethel was, in every one's opinion, a holy place, that which Jacob had consecrated after he had been vouchsafed the vision of the ladder, and where God had so frequently appeared to him, that he thought he had reason to call it (e) "the gate of heaven."

Jeroboam, no question, was not insensible of the advantage his rival enjoyed in having the temple in his possession; and might many times wish that he had been able to have built one that might have stood in competition with it; but this was impossible. Seven years and an half had Solomon been in completing the temple at Jerusalem, notwithstanding the multitude of hands that he employed, and the vast preparations of money and materials that his father had left him. To build one less magnificent had been inglorious to Jeroboam; and to build one any ways adequate, was more than he could hope to see finished in his days. The people were grown weary of such public expensive works; the tax had been heavy and burdensome to them. (f) "Thy father made our yoke grievous," was the complaint they brought against Rehoboam. Upon this the whole revolt was founded. And therefore, in the present state of Jeroboam's affairs, a new temple was, of all projects, the most unpopular, and the likeliest to create a total defection; since it was running directly into his rival's error, and, in effect, declaring, that (g) his little finger should be found heavier than Solomon's loins had ever been.

In the mean time his subjects deserted apace; and, for want of a place of religious worship to resort to, were returning to Jerusalem, and to their allegiance to the house

(a) 1 Kings xiv. 16.
(e) Gen. xxviii. 17.

(b) 2 Kings xvii. 21.
(f) 1 Kings xii. 4.

(c) 1 Kings xiv. 9.
(g) Ibid. ver. 10.

(d) Judg. xvii.

of David at once. Something therefore was necessary to be done, in order to remedy this growing evil; and, because Jeroboam readily foresaw, that, to support himself in his usurpation, he might possibly want the assistance of the Egyptians, the best policy that at present occurred to his thoughts, was to do a courtesy to them, in setting up a form of worship much like theirs, and, at the same time, to gratify his own subjects in the choice of such places of worship as had been famous in the days of old, and whose reputed sacredness, * as well as proximity, might commute for the want of a temple.

From 1 Kings
viii. to the end
of 2 Chron.

Gezer, we own, lay at a considerable distance from Egypt, which, since the time of Sesostris, had seldom extended its conquests into foreign lands; and therefore, to account for its conduct here, we must observe, that Gezer was so ancient a town in Canaan, that when Joshua (*a*) conquered it, it had a king of no small note; that in the division of the land (*b*) it fell to the tribe of Ephraim, was bordering upon the northern part of the country of the Philistines, and not far from the Mediterranean sea; that it was one of the eight and forty cities which (together with their suburbs) were given to the Levites, an inland town, but at no great distance from the sea-port of Joppa; that when the Ephraimites took possession of it, (*c*) they suffered the Canaanites to cohabit with them, who gave them no small disturbance, and towards the latter end of David's reign, expelled them from thence; that when Solomon came to the throne, he applied himself chiefly to the building of the temple, nor thought it worth while to disturb the peace of his reign for the recovery of a few revolted cities; that when a match was proposed between Solomon and Pharaoh's daughter, Pharaoh thought he could not do a more acceptable service, or shew the benefit of his alliance better, than in taking Gezer, and some adjacent places; that, for this purpose, he set out with a large fleet of ships, landed at Joppa, besieged Gezer, and because it made an obstinate defence, (*d*) burnt it to the ground, and slew all the Canaanites that were in it; but that not long after he began to rebuild it; and when his daughter was espoused to Solomon, gave him this, and some other places he had taken along with it, as part of her portion; for it is a mistaken notion that princes daughters had no portion in those days.

Among the Jews indeed, the custom was for the men to give the dower, or to make some present to the parents, for the favour of having their daughter in marriage. But this custom prevailed only among the inferior sort: Ladies of the first distinction were, in all nations, wont to bring their husbands fortunes proportionate to their quality: For Saul, we read, declared, that the man who should slay Goliath, should not only have his daughter in marriage, but together with her plenty of riches and other valuable emoluments. Antiochus the Great promised to settle upon his, the kingdoms of Judea and Samaria, as a dower to Ptolemy king of Egypt; and (to name no more) Agamemnon, in times of an elder date, though not so great affluence, offered no less than *² seven good towns with his, without any reserved rent, or other deduction from her husband.

* The speech which Josephus makes for Jeroboam upon this occasion is to this purpose. "I need not tell you, my countrymen, that God is every where, and not confined to any certain place, but wherever we are, he hears our prayers and accepts our worship, in one place as well as another; and therefore I am not at all for your going up to Jerusalem at this time to a people that hate you. It is a long tedious journey, and all this only for the sake of religion. He who built that temple was but a man as every one here is, and the golden calves, that I have provided for you, the one in Bethel, and the other in Dan, are consecrated as well as the temple, and brought so much nearer to you, on purpose for the convenience of your worship, where you may pay your duty to

God, in such a manner as best pleases you, &c." *Jewish Antiq.* lib. viii. c. 3.

(*a*) Josh. x. 33.

(*b*) Ibid. xvi. 5.

(*c*) Ibid. xxi. 20, 21.

(*d*) 1 Kings ix. 16.

* 'Εἰ δὲ κεν Ἀργεὺς ἰκοίμεθ' Ἀχαιῶν, οὐθαὶ ἀρούρης,
Γαμβρόν κέν μοι εἴοι· τίσσι δὲ μιν ἴσοι Ὀρέστη
'Ὅς μοι τηλύγετος τρέφεται θαλίῃ ἐνὶ πολλῇ
Τρεῖς δὲ μοι εἰσὶ θυγατρὲς ἐνὶ μεγάρῳ ἐϋπύκτω,
Τάων, ἣν κ' ἐβέλησι φίλῃν ἀνάειδον ἀγίσθην
Πρὸς οἶκον Πηλῆος· ἐγὼ δ' ἐπιμειλία δάσω
Πολλὰ μάλ', ὅσσ' οὐπὼ τις εἴη ἐπέδακε θυγατρὶ
'Επτά δὲ οἱ δάσω εὐναίεμνα πτολίεθρα, &c.

Iliad ix. lin. 141:

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&c. or 4421.
Ant. Christ.
1033, &c.
or 990.

So that Pharaoh did no more than conform to the practice of other great princes, in endowing his daughter with the places he had taken from the Philistines, in all probability, for that very purpose*.

How he came to swerve so soon from this alliance, as to give protection and countenance to his son-in-law's avowed enemies, need be no wonder at all to him who considers by what various springs kingdoms are governed; how the interest of nations shifts about, according to the different situation of their affairs, and of how little weight and validity all leagues and treaties are, when once national interest comes to be thrown into the counterbalance.

But this is not all. The Pharaoh who received Jeroboam in his exile, in all probability was not the king whose daughter Solomon had married, but a prince of another line, and of different views. The woman whom Solomon married was one of the dynasty of the Diospolites, whose ancestors had lived at Thebes; but in the year that Solomon finished the temple, (a) there happened a revolution in Egypt, wherein this dynasty, or race of kings, lost the throne,*² and was succeeded by that of the Taanites, of whom Semendis, the father of Shishak, was the first king. These kept their court at Zoan, an ancient town not far from the borders of Canaan, and therefore very convenient for the reception of any refugees that should come from thence. For as it was the interest of the former kings of Egypt to keep up a good understanding with the house of David; so now it became equally the interest of the present race to make use of all instruments to embarrass them, lest, by joining with the deposed family, they might at any time occasion another revolution in Egypt. And this, by the bye, suggests the reason (whereof the Scripture is silent) why Shishak invaded the kingdom of Judah with a vast army, but never pretended to annoy Israel; namely, because he thought it advisable to disable Rehoboam from assisting the deposed family in Egypt, but to encourage Jeroboam, who, being an usurper himself, was questionless a friend and ally to those princes that were in the like circumstances.

Who the queen of Sheba was, and in what climate the country from whence she came to visit Solomon lay, are points wherein the learned are not so well agreed: But whether her name was Nicaule, Candace, Marqueda, or Balkis (for different authors give her these several names), it matters not much, if we can but find out what this Sheba was, whereof she is said to have been queen.

Josephus, and, from his authority, many more are of opinion, that Sheba was the ancient name of Meroë, an island, or rather peninsula in Egypt, before Cambyzes, in compliment to his sister (other historians call her his mother), gave it her name. He tells

* [It does not, from all this, follow, that ladies of the first distinction were, in that age and in all nations, wont to bring their husbands fortunes in proportion to their quality, or that such was the general practice even of great princes. Saul's declaration shews that he meant to give his daughter, in reward for the most important service, which could be rendered to the state; but he kept not his promise. Afterwards he gave a younger daughter to David, but it was for a price—even for the slaughter of 200 of his enemies. It was of the utmost importance to Antiochus and Agamemnon to conciliate, at any price, *Ptolemy* and *Achilles*; and therefore they offered great dowers with their daughters to purchase the friendship of these formidable enemies; but this was not the case with respect to Pharaoh and Solomon. Pharaoh's giving up *Gezer*, therefore, to Solomon as a dowry with his daughter, is a proof that David and Solomon were two of the greatest mo-

narchs of their age; that he thought himself honoured by the alliance; and that the sacred historical account of Solomon's glory is not exaggerated.]

(a) *Bedford's Scripture Chronology*, lib. vi. c. 2.

*² [I know not on what authority this is said, but it seems to be a mistake. There can be no doubt but that it was Shishak, who afterwards invaded Judah, that gave shelter to Jeroboam when obliged to flee from the vengeance of Solomon; but if Shishak was the *Chephrenes* of Herodotus, which is by much the most probable opinion, neither he nor his immediate predecessor was either the first or the last of any dynasty of Egyptian kings. Solomon had indeed married either his sister, or, which is more probable, his aunt; but, as Bishop Patrick judiciously observes, "kingdoms never marry;" and therefore there was nothing unnatural or uncommon in his conduct on this occasion.]

us likewise, that she was queen both of Egypt and Ethiopia; and * the Ethiopians indeed have a tradition, that upon her return she had a son by Solomon, whose posterity reigned there many years; and, to this very day, they have preserved a continual list of their names and successors. From 1 Kings viii. to the end of 2 Chron.

There are these exceptions, however, to be made to the opinion of the Jewish historian; viz. that whereas he cites Herodotus as speaking of his queen Nicaule, Herodotus makes mention of none but only Niconis queen of Egypt; nor does he say one syllable of her pretended journey to Jerusalem; whereas he says of this Nicaule, that she was queen of Egypt and Ethiopia both, the Sacred History is plain, that, in the time of Solomon, there reigned in Egypt that Pharaoh whose daughter he married, and, in his son Rehoboam's time, Shishak. Whereas he tells us, that the ancient name of Meroë, before the time of Cambyses, was Sheba; for this he seems to want authority, since (a) Diodorus, and other historians, represent this city as built new from the ground, and not repaired by Cambyses.

The more probable opinion, therefore, is,—that this queen of Sheba came from a country so named, which lay not in Ethiopia nor Africa, but in the southern part of Arabia Felix; because it is generally allowed, that the Sabeans lived in Arabia, and that their country was usually called by the orientalists, “The kingdom of the South;” in allusion to which, our Saviour styles this princess (b) “The Queen of the South,” because their country borders upon the Southern Ocean, beyond which the ancients knew no farther land, and therefore our Saviour (according to the common mode of speaking) says of this princess, that “she came from the utmost parts of the earth;” because, in this country *, women were known to govern as well as men; because the common produce of it was gold, silver, spices, and precious stones, the very presents which this princess made Solomon; and (if any popular traditions may be credited) (c) because the Arabians talk of their queen Balkis, who went to visit Solomon, and shew travellers the place of her nativity to this very day.

Now if this princess came from Arabia, there is reason to believe that she was originally descended from Abraham, by his wife Keturah, one of whose sons (a) begat Sheba, who was the first planter of this country; and, consequently, that she might

* The Ethiopians, who held, that this queen of Sheba was of their country, tell us, that she returned big with child of a boy, which she had by Solomon; that, when this child was of age to learn, she sent him to Solomon, who brought him up as his own son; that, in his education, he took care to provide the ablest masters for him, and then sent him back to his mother, whom he succeeded in the kingdom; that the kings of Ethiopia were descended from Solomon by this young prince, whom they call Meilic, or Menilehec; and that of his family there were four and twenty emperors, down to Basilides, who reigned about the middle of the seventeenth age. Vid. Ludolph's Hist. of Ethiopia. [Mr Bruce confirms this report of Ludolph's, bringing sufficient proofs that the Abyssinians believe their present royal family to be lineal descendants of Solomon and the queen of Sheba. The tradition of the country certainly accounts better than any other hypothesis that could be easily framed, for that mixture of Judaism with Christianity which characterizes the religion of Abyssinia; and our author justly observes, that the trade carried on by the Israelites with the Cushites and shepherds on the coast of Africa, would naturally “create a desire in the queen of Azab, the sovereign of that country, to go herself, and see the application of the im-

mense treasures that had been exported from her country for a series of years, and the prince who so magnificently employed them.” The Abyssinians, he says, call this queen *Maqueda*;] but the Arabians, who contest with them the honour of having had this woman for their sovereign, tell us, that her name was Balkis, the daughter of Hadhad, son of Scharhabil, the twentieth king of Jemen, or Arabia Felix, and that she reigned in the city of Mareb, the capital of the province of Sheba. Their histories are full of fabulous stories concerning her journey to Solomon's court, and her marriage with him, but more particularly concerning the bird Hudhud (in English a lapwing); which Solomon made use of to send into Arabia upon occasion, and to bring him dispatches from thence. *Calmet's Dictionary*, under the word *Nicaule*.

(a) Lib. i. et Luc. Ampel. de Cambyse.

(b) Matth. xii. 42.

* It is generally supposed, that these words of Claudian relate to these people:

——Medis, levibusque Sabæis

Imperat hic sexus, reginarumque sub armis

Barbariæ pars magna jacet—

Eutrop. lib. 1.

(c) *Calmet's Commentary* on 1 Kings x. 1. and his *Dictionary* under the word *Sheba*.

(d) Gen. xxv. 1, 3.

A. M. 3001, &c. or 4421. Ant. Chris. 1003, &c. or 990. have some knowledge of revealed religion, by tradition at least, from her pious ancestors. To this purpose the Scripture seems to intimate, that the design of her visit to Solomon was, not so much to gratify her curiosity, as to inform her understanding in matters relating to piety and Divine worship. It was Solomon's fame (*a*) "concerning the name of the Lord," i. e. concerning his knowledge of the Supreme Being, and the proper manner of worshipping him, that excited her to take so long a journey; and therefore our Saviour says, that, as she came so far to hear his wisdom, (his wisdom concerning what? concerning the nature and worship of Almighty God) she would, at the day of judgment, "rise up against that generation" which refused to listen to him.

Now, if this was the end of this queen's visit to Solomon, who can say but that she left her country to good purpose, since it was to "find (*b*) wisdom, and to get understanding, the merchandise of which is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gains thereof than fine gold; (*c*) the price of which is above rubies, (*d*) and all that can be desired, and is not to be compared to it?" But, even upon the supposition that her errand was to acquire knowledge of an inferior kind, or even to make trial of Solomon's sagacity, by proposing some enigmatical questions to him; yet who knows not, that it was the practice in those days for persons of the first rank and figure in life to exercise their wits in this manner?

(*e*) Josephus, from some writers of the Phœnician history, tells us, that Solomon used frequently to send to his friend Hiram problems, and riddles, upon the forfeiture of a great sum of money if he could not expound them; and that one Abdemonus, a Tyrian, not only unriddled Solomon's difficulties, but sent back some new propositions of his own, which, if Solomon could not resolve, he was to incur the like forfeiture. Now the Scripture remarks of Solomon, that (*f*) "his wisdom excelled the wisdom of the east-country," and by the east-country some do understand the seat of the ancient Arabians, who, in the days of Pythagoras, were so renowned for their wisdom, that (*g*) that philosopher thought it worth his while to go and reside among them for some time. They were great masters of wit and ingenuity; and valued themselves upon their sagaciousness and dexterity, both in propounding and solving problems; and therefore no wonder that this queen of Sheba, who (as Josephus informs us) was a woman of exquisite understanding herself, should fall in with the humour of the times, and carry with her some problems of her Arabian sages, on purpose to make a trial of Solomon's parts: nor can we imagine but that, in complaisance to so royal a visiter, as well as regard to his own reputation, Solomon would take care to answer her questions, and (as the Scripture expresses it) satisfy (*h*) "all her desire, whatsoever she asked."

Without knowing the custom of the princes of the East, their pomp and sumptuousness of living, one might be tempted to wonder what possible use Solomon might make of this milliad of wives and concubines that he had: but as he was between forty and fifty years old before he ran into this excess, we cannot but think that he kept this multitude of women more for state than any other service. (*i*) Darius Codomannus was wont to carry along with him in his camp no less than three hundred and fifty concubines in time of war; nor was his queen at all offended at it, because these women used to reverence and adore her as if she had been a goddess. F. Le Comte, in his History of China, tells us, that the emperor there has a vast number of wives, chosen out of the prime beauties of the country, many of which he never so much as saw in his whole life; and therefore it is not improbable that Solomon (as he found his riches increase) might enlarge his expences, and endeavour to surpass all the princes of his time in this as well as all other kinds of pomp and magnificence.

(*a*) 1 Kings x. 1. (*b*) Prov. iii. 13. (*c*) Job. xxviii. 18. (*d*) Prov. viii. 11.
 (*e*) *Jewish Antiquities*, lib. viii. c. 2. (*f*) 1 Kings iv. 30. (*g*) Porphyr. apud Cyrill.
 lib. x. contra Julian. (*h*) 1 Kings x. 13. (*i*) Athen. lib. xiii. c. 1.

A man of Solomon's great wisdom, one would think, should have converted those women, that were about him, to the true religion, rather than have suffered himself to be perverted by them to a false one. The Scripture tells us indeed, that (a) "he went after Ashtoreth, the goddess of the Zidonians, and † Milcom, the abomination of the Ammonites, and †² Chemosh, the abomination of Moab; but surely he could never be so far infatuated as to prefer these idols before the God of Israel. These women, no doubt, as they had got an ascendant over him, (b) might abate his zeal against idolatry, and prevail with him for a public toleration of their religion: they might obtain money of him for the making of their idols, the support of their priests, and expence of their sacrifices; nay, and perhaps might sometimes persuade him, in complaisance, to go with them to their worship, or to partake of their lewd and riotous feasts; but that they should ever be able to alter his notions concerning the true God, or prevail with him to believe, that the images they worshipped were informed with any kind of divinity, is a thing incredible.

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In the course of this prevarication, however, he continued so long, that it is now become a famous question, whether he be in a state of salvation or no? Those that maintain the negative, are apt to suggest, that, though the Scripture gives us a particular account of his fall, yet it takes no notice of his recovery; that without the grace of God he could not repent, and yet his actions were such as justly deserved a forfeiture of that grace; that had he repented, he would have pulled down the idolatrous temples which he had erected, whereas we find them standing many years after him; and therefore they conclude, that as he did not (c) "sorrow after a godly sort" for his impieties, because in his whole behaviour (to the very last), they can discern no carefulness wrought in him, no clearing of himself, no indignation, no fear, no vehement desire, no zeal, no revenge, which the apostle has made the proper characteristics of a true repentance. The promise, however, which God makes to David concerning his son Solomon, may incline us to think favourably of his salvation: (d) "I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men, but my mercy shall not depart away from him." And therefore we may presume, that towards the conclusion of his life he grew sensible of his transgressions, (e) though the sacred writer takes no notice of it, on purpose to leave a blot upon his memory, and a frightful example of human weakness to all posterity; that the temples which he had built to heathen idols, he pulled down and demolished, though they (f) were afterwards raised again upon the same places by other impious princes; and that, after his fall, he wrote his book of Ecclesiastes, as a monument of his repentance and acknowledgment of his own apostacy, and a warning and admonition to all others, that, however they may think of (g) "doing whatever their eyes desired, of keeping nothing from them, and of withholding their hearts from no

(a) 1 Kings xi. 5, 7.

† This god is the same with *Moloch*, which, both in Hebrew and Ethiopic, signifies a king; but then there are various sentiments concerning the relation which this god had to the other Pagan deities. Some believe, that Moloch was Saturn, others Mercury, others Venus, and others again Mars, or Mithra. But F. Calmet, in his dissertation before his commentary upon Leviticus, has made it more than probable, that this god was the sun, who is called the king of heaven, as the moon may be said to be the queen thereof, for its make and manner of worship. Vide vol. i. page 550, in the Notes.

†² *Chemosh*, or *Chamos*, comes from a root, which, in Arabic, signifies to make haste; and from hence some have imagined, that he is the same with the sun,

whose motion is supposed to be so hasty and rapid; though some from the Hebrew root, which signifies *contractatus*, or *handled*, will have him the same with the Roman Priapus, who is called "*Pater contractationem nocturnarum*:" While others, from the near resemblance of the Hebrew *Chamos* with the word *Comos*, have rather thought it to be Bacchus, the god of drunkenness: But in either acception it may be supposed to represent either Noah or Lot.

Jurieu Hist. des dogmes et Cult. part iv.

(b) *Pool's Annotations.*

(c) 2 Cor. vii. 11.

(d) 2 Sam. vii. 14, 15.

(e) *Patrick's Commentary.*

(f) *Calmet's Dissert. sur la Salut. du Roy Solomon.*

(g) Eccles. ii. 10, 11.

A. M. 3001,
&c. or 4421.
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joy;" yet, in the event, they would find (what his experience had taught him so late) that all "was vanity and vexation of spirit;" that there was no profit in any kind of wickedness under the sun, but (a) "that to fear God, and keep his commandments, was the whole duty of man."

It is making a wrong judgment of things, to think, that the customs of ancient times and of different countries should agree with those of our own age and climate. We indeed, when we have any thing to declare or relate, do it, for the most part, in express words; but the people of the East, especially those who took upon them the character of prophets, were fond of discovering their minds in † signs and emblematical actions; because they looked upon such representations more lively and affecting than any that proceeded from the mouth only could be.

When the prophet was sent to anoint Jehu to be king of Israel, the question which the rest of the captains put to him, (b) "Wherefore came this mad fellow to thee?" sufficiently indicates their scorn and contempt of him: And in like manner, Ahijah might have addressed himself to a man of Jeroboam's haughty spirit to small purpose, had he not, by some previous action, drawn his observation, and made him attentive to

(a) Eccles. xii. 13.

† The rending of Ahijah's garment is the first symbolical action that we meet with in any prophet; but, in after ages, instances of this kind became more frequent. Thus Jeremiah "made himself bonds and yokes, and put them upon his neck," to signify the near approaching captivity of Jerusalem, Jer. xxvii. 2. Isaiah, to denote the captivity of Egypt and Ethiopia, walked naked, i. e. without his upper garments on, "and bare foot for three years in the streets," Isaiah xx. 2, 3. Ezekiel (to make the people sensible that they were to be carried away into a strange land) was ordered to make a breach in the wall of his house, and through that to remove his household goods, "in the day time, and in their sight," Ezek. xii. 3, 4. The false prophet Zedekiah made himself a pair of iron horns, and said to Ahab, "with these shalt thou push the Syrians," 1 Kings xxii. 11. And the like practice continued under the New Testament likewise; for Agabus having bound his hands and feet with St Paul's girdle, told the company, that "so should the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man unto whom it belonged," Acts. xxi. 11.

[Samuel having exhorted the people to return to the Lord with all their hearts, and to put away the strange gods from among them, said, "Gather all Israel to Mizpeh, and I will pray for you unto the Lord. And they gathered together to Mizpeh, and drew water, and poured it out before the Lord, and fasted on that day, and said there, We have sinned against the Lord." (1 Sam. vii. 5, 6.) The sacred historian does not explain in words the meaning of this drawing of water and pouring it out; nor was there any occasion for his doing so; the action of itself expressing with sufficient clearness that a *deluge of tears was due for their offences*. But it is not in Israel alone that information was given by action, or that when words were employed, action was added, to fix their meaning, and to impress it on the memory. Herodotus informs us (Lib. iii. cap. 46.) that the Samnians, in their distress, having arrived at Sparta, and obtained an audience of the magistrates, made a long

speech in the language of suppliants; to which they received for answer, that "the beginning of their discourse was already forgotten, and the conclusion of it not understood." At a second interview the Samian orators simply produced an empty leathern bag, saying, that it contained no bread; to which the Spartans replied, that they observed the bag and determined to assist them. Again, we are told by Clemens Alexandrinus (as quoted by Bishop Warburton) that "Identhura, a king of the Scythians (as Phercydes Syrus relates the story), when ready to oppose Darius, who had passed the Ister, sent to the Persian a symbol instead of letters, namely, a mouse, a frog, a bird, a dart, and a plough," or, as it is otherwise reported, "five darts," without the plough. This symbol was understood by Gobryas, one of the Persian chiefs, to signify that the army of Darius should never recross the Ister, unless like birds they could fly into the air, like mice burrow in the earth, or like frogs take refuge in marshes. (See *Herodotus*, lib. iv. cap. 13.) As the symbol is mentioned by Clemens, I should think its meaning was, that the Scythians would dispute every inch of ground, and at last leave the country a barren desert to the Persians, rather than submit to their yoke. But whatever be the precise meaning of this particular symbol, it is obvious, that in those ages all important messages were at least accompanied by significant actions. They still are so among all savage nations; and Bishop Warburton has clearly traced the practice from its origin in necessity. Where languages are rude and confined, speakers are obliged to call in the aid of significant actions to make themselves understood; and as every impression made through the eye takes a faster hold of the mind than impressions made through the medium of the other senses, orators have in all ages, and in every country, given force to their speeches, by what was originally necessary to make scanty and equivocal languages understood. See *Divine Legation*, book iv. sect. 4.; and book vi. sect. 5. with the Note G. at the end of that book.]

(b) 2 Kings ix. 11.

the message he was going to deliver. Now, if any such symbolical act was necessary at this time, the tearing of his garment was more proper than any, because, in the case of Saul, Samuel had applied it, to denote the alienation of his kingdom. (a) "The Lord hath rent the kingdom of Israel from thee this day, and hath given it to a neighbour of thine, that is better than thou:" And if rending the garment was no insignificant symbol upon this occasion, the newer the garment was, the more it would declare, that what the prophet did was by a Divine command, and upon mature deliberation.

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This may, in some measure, suffice to rescue Ahijah from the imputation of madness in tearing his garment to pieces. And (to come now, in the last place, to the case of the other prophet, who came from Judah to denounce judgments against the altar of Bethel, and was slain in his return, for disobeying the Divine injunction) this we may think was a small offence, that hardly deserved so severe a fate; but then we should do well to consider, that (b) whenever God, in an extraordinary manner, discovers his will to a prophet, he always makes such a sensible impression upon his mind, that he cannot but perceive himself actuated by a Divine spirit; and, consequently, cannot but be assured of the evidence of his own revelation. This evidence, the prophet that was sent to Bethel had; for, as he was able by the power that was given him to work miracles, he could not but be sensible of his Divine mission, and that the particular injunction of his not eating or drinking in the town of Bethel, was as much the will of God as any other part of his commission.

Now the design of God in this prohibition, was to express his abhorrence of that idolatrous place; and therefore the other pretended revelation of the † old prophet, who lived therein, was justly to be suspected, not only because it was repugnant to God's main design, but because it came from a person who had given no great testimony of his sincerity in chusing to live in a place notoriously infected with idolatry, and yet making no public remonstrances against it. The consideration of this one circumstance should have made the young prophet diffident of what the other told him, at least till he had shewn him some Divine testimony to convince him; for it argued a great deal of levity, if not infidelity of his own revelation, to listen to that of another man, in contradiction to what he had abundant reason to believe was true.

The short of the matter is, The prophet from Judah had sufficient evidence of the truth of his own revelation; had sufficient cause to suspect some corrupt ends in the

(a) 1 Sam. xv 28.

(b) *Stillingfleet's* Orig. Sacrae.

† The learned are divided in their sentiments concerning this prophet at Bethel. Some will needs have him to have been a false prophet, highly in esteem with king Jeroboam, because he prophesied to him soft things, and such as would humour him in his wickedness. To this purpose they tell us, that going to visit the king one day, and finding him in a deep concern upon account of the menaces and reproaches, which the man of God from Judah had denounced against him, he undertook to persuade him, that that prophet was an impostor, and to elude the force of the miracle he had wrought, by telling him, that there was nothing extraordinary in his altar's falling down, considering that it was new built, not thoroughly settled, loaded with sacrifices, and heated with fire. And as for the matter of his arm, that was occasioned only by his having over wrought himself in pulling the sacrifices along, and lifting them up upon the altar, which might make his hand numb for a while, but, upon a little rest, it came to itself again; and so, with plausible distinctions and loose insinuations, he

shuffled off the miracle, and made the king more obdurate in wickedness than ever. Others think more favourably of the old prophet, viz. that he was a true prophet of God, though (some say) a wicked one, not unlike the famous Balaam, who sacrificed every thing to his profit: Whilst others say, he was a weak one, who thought he might innocently employ an officious lie to bring the prophet of Judah back, who was under a prohibition indeed, but such an one, as (in his opinion) related only to the house of Jeroboam, and such others as were of an idolatrous religion. *Josephus's* Jewish Antiquities, lib. viii. c. 3. [He could not be so very weak as not to know that he was uttering a lie; but he appears to have been very wicked. He was indeed like Balaam in fearing Jehovah and serving other gods; and like him too, he was compelled to foretel an event which he did not wish; to denounce the Divine vengeance on the man whom he had himself led into a snare and into sin; and thus to proclaim his own falsehood and villany. If he was a man of any moral feeling, this was a punishment as severe as could be inflicted, and must have had a salutary effect both on himself and on his sons.]

A. M. 3001,
&c. or 4421.
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prophet that came to recal him ; and had sufficient reason to expect an interposition of the same power that gave him the injunction to repeal it : And therefore his crime was an easy credulity, or complying with an offer (merely to gratify a petulant appetite) that he knew was repugnant to a Divine command ; and the lesson we are to learn from God's severity in this instance, is,—Not [to adopt new doctrines without due inquiry into their origin, and their truth, and not] to suffer our faith to be perverted by any suggestions that are made against a revelation that is of uncontested Divine authority ; but, (a) “ if an angel from heaven (as the apostle puts the case) should preach any other gospel, than what we have received, to detest and denounce him accursed.”

Here, however, we may take occasion to admire the unsearchable secrets of the Divine justice. Jeroboam revolts from his lawful sovereign ; forsakes the worship of the true God ; engages the people in gross idolatry, and is himself hardened with the menaces and miracles of the prophet that was sent to him. A false prophet deceives an innocent man with a lie, and draws him into an act of disobedience, contrary to his inclination ; and yet this wicked Jeroboam, and this seducing prophet go unpunished, while the other, who might mean no ill perhaps in turning back, is slain by a lion, and his body deprived of the sepulture of his fathers. We must acknowledge indeed, that the depths of the judgments of God are an abyss that our understandings cannot fathom ; but nothing certainly can be a more sensible proof of the truth of another life, and of the eternal recompences or punishments that attend it, than to see the righteous so rigorously treated here for very slight offences ; Moses excluded the land of promise (b) for a diffident thought ; (c) Lot's wife changed into a statue of salt for her looking back ; and (d) David, for a vain curiosity, punished with the death of no less than seventy thousand of his subjects : And if God be thus severe to his own servants ; (e) “ if judgment thus begins at the house of God, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear ? ” As sentence against every evil man, therefore, is not speedily executed, this is our proof, this our assurance, that (f) “ God will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.”

DISSERTATION I.

OF SOLOMON'S RICHES, AND HIS TRADE TO OPHIR.

HE who only looks into the map, and there observes in how small a compass the land of Canaan is comprised, may be apt to think that the kings of that country were petty princes, ruling over an indigent, obscure people, unable to bear any great expence, and incapable of making any considerable figure, except now and then at the head of their armies : But he will soon perceive his mistake, when he comes to reflect on the immense riches which David left his son Solomon ; on the vast expence of Solomon's magnificent living ; and on the several branches of his revenue, which enabled him to sustain that expence.

The Scripture informs us, that out of the revenues of the crown David left Solomon, merely for the purpose of building the temple, (g) “ an hundred thousand talents of

(a) Gal. i. 8, 9.
(e) 1 Pet. iv. 17, 18.

(b) Numb. xx. 11, 12.
(f) Eccles. xii. 14.

(c) Gen. xix. 26.

(d) 2 Sam. xxiv. 15.

(g) 1 Chron. xxii. 14.

gold, and a thousand thousand talents of silver;" out of his privy purse, (a) "three thousand talents of gold, and seven thousand talents of silver;" and out of the benevolence of the princes, (b) "five thousand talents and ten thousand drams of gold, and ten thousand talents of silver." Now, since it is generally agreed that a talent of silver was equivalent to three hundred forty-two pounds, three shillings, and nine pence; and a talent of gold amounted to no less than five thousand, four hundred, and twenty-five pounds Sterling, what an immense sum must all these talents of gold and silver amount to? Some of the best authors of weights and measures have computed, that if all the walls, pavement, lining, and covering of the temple had been made of massy gold (even with the wages of the workmen and vessels belonging to it), they would not have come up to the value here specified; and therefore, upon this supposition, they have advanced a notion that the Hebrews had two kinds of talents, a larger, which was called the talent of the sanctuary, and a smaller, which was the common talent, and one half less than the other, by which all such exorbitant sums (as they say) ought to be reckoned. But what grounds they have for this distinction we cannot perceive, (c) since it no where appears, either in the Scriptures or in any other history, that the Jews (especially before the captivity of Babylon) had any more talents than one; and that their talent, whether of silver or gold, arose to a sum tantamount to what we have stated it at, there are several instances in the Old Testament that may convince us.

To this purpose we may observe, that when Amaziah king of Judah hired an hundred thousand men out of Israel to fight against the Edomites, he gave no more than (d) "an hundred talents of silver" for them, which would have been but a very trifling price indeed, had the talent here been of less value than three thousand shekels: That when Omri, king of Israel, bought the mountain whereon was built the city of Samaria, he paid for it no more than (e) "two talents of silver;" and yet these two talents were ten thousand, nine hundred, and fifty pounds, a proper sum for such a purchase: That when Sennacherib, king of Assyria, had obliged Hezekiah to pay him (f) "three hundred talents of silver, and thirty talents of gold," that good king exhausted, not only his own treasure and the treasure of the house of the Lord, but was forced likewise to cut the gold off from the doors and pillars of the temple: And (to name no more) that, when Pharaoh Nechoh (g) "put the land to a tribute of an hundred talents of silver, and a talent of gold, Jehoiakim was necessitated to levy a tax extraordinary upon all his subjects, that every one might contribute according to his power. But neither of these remarks (viz. that these two kings were thus straitened about the payment) would the sacred historian have made, had the talent in his days been of considerably less value (h) than Moses is known to rate it at. So that, upon the whole, we may conclude, that the Hebrew talent continued always the same, and amounted to a much greater sum than those who are for debasing its value are willing to allow.

"But, if the talent must be reckoned at so high a rate, how can we imagine that David, who had no estate from his family, and whose dominions were far from being extensive, could ever be able to amass such an immense quantity of wealth?" Now, in answer to this, we should do well to consider, that, even before the death of Saul, David was at the head of some brave troops, with whom he used to make inroads into the enemies country, and frequently bring from thence large booty; that after Saul's death, he reigned forty years in all, and in that space made it his business to heap up riches, especially when he came to understand, that God had appointed his son and successor to build him a temple; that, in the time of his reign, he had wars with the Syrians, the Philistines, the Ammonites, the Moabites, and several other nations, from whom he re-

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of 2 Chron.

(a) 1 Chron. xxix. 4.
que David laissa a Solomon.
(f) 2 Kings xviii. 15.

(b) Ibid. xxix. 7.
(d) 2 Chron. xxv. 6.
(g) Ibid. xxiii. 33.

(c) Calmet's Dissert. sur les Richesses,
(e) 1 Kings xvi. 24.
(h) Exod. xxxviii. 25, 26.

A. M. 3001,
&c. or 4421.
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turned always victorious, and always laden with their treasures and † rich spoils; that, by this means, he enlarged his dominions as far as (a) the promise made to Abraham extends, even from the river Euphrates to the Mediterranean Sea on the one side, and to the Nile on the other; that the countries which he subdued and made tributary to him, such as Arabia, Phœnicia, Mesopotamia, Idumea, &c. were exceedingly rich, and productive of several mines of gold and other metals; and that the tributes which were wont to be exacted upon such occasions, were either annual imposts, or vast sums of money at once: If we consider, I say, the spoils which he took from conquered nations, and the tribute which he raised from such as submitted to his empire, we shall have no cause to wonder at his leaving such immense treasures to his son.

But besides these revenues from abroad, he had a large income from the taxes which his own subjects annually paid him, and the improvements he made of his own estate; which in those days were accounted, not only lawful and allowable, but even honourable and commendable in princes as well as others. The Sacred History has preserved (b) the names of the officers whom he employed in this capacity; and, from the different provinces wherein they acted, we may, in some measure, form a judgment of the largeness of this branch of his income. He had officers set over the labourers who were to till his ground; officers to take care of the dressing of his vines, olive and fig trees; officers to inspect the gathering of his fruits, and the managery of his wine and oil cellars; officers to look to the feeding of his camels and asses, his herds of cattle and flocks of sheep; and officers who were to attend to the selling and exportation of all these: For David, we must know, had the command of the Mediterranean Sea, and had established a commerce with the Phœnicians, Egyptians, Syrians, Philistines, and other nations, who took off his camels, asses, oxen, sheep, wine, corn, oil, fruits, and other commodities, in large quantities, and at very advantageous prices: All which being put together, will make the amount of what David left his son no less than what the sacred writer has recorded.

(c) And indeed, considering the vast expences Solomon was at, in his chariots, in his horses, in his camels, in his armies, in his shipping, in his buildings, in his furniture, in his servants, for his table, and for his women (which came at length to no less than a thousand, and all to be maintained in the Port of Queens), we can hardly think, that a small revenue would ever have been sufficient to answer all these demands.

The Scripture indeed informs us, that Solomon's annual income was (d) "six hundred, threescore, and six talents of gold, besides what he had of the merchant-men, and of the traffic of spice-merchants, and of all the kings of Arabia, and of all the governors of the country:" But these six hundred, threescore, and six talents of gold (e) are thought, by most interpreters, to be no more than what arose from the tribute which he imposed upon conquered nations; over and above which he had a yearly tax paid by his own subjects; duties upon the import and export of all merchandize; mines of gold, and silver, and other metals; the voluntary presents of other princes; and a trade to Ophir and Tarshish, which brought him in riches inestimable.

These were two branches of profit which his father had not, at least not in the same

† Besides the personal ornaments worn by those who went to battle, in the Eastern nations it was customary to adorn their weapons and utensils of war with the richest metals. We learn from the history of David, that the Syrians, whom he subdued and slew in vast multitudes, wore shields of gold; and therefore we need not doubt but that their quivers, the handles of their swords, &c. were of the same metal. He was victorious in about twenty battles over the richest enemies in the world; and therefore their

personal spoils, rich arms, military chests, and gods of gold and silver, (always carried to battle with them) could not but amount to an immense sum; and in all probability the spoils of their cities and countries to a much greater. *The History of the Life of King David.*

(a) Gen. xv. 7.

(b) 1 Chron. xxvii. 26, &c.

(c) *Calmet's Dissert. sur les Richesses que David laissa a Solomon.*

(d) 1 Kings x. 14, 15.

(e) *Calmet, ibid.*

extent. Of the former it is said, that (a) "every man that came to hear Solomon's wisdom brought his present, vessels of silver, and vessels of gold, and garments, and armour, and spices, and horses, and mules," and continued to do the same every year; and of the latter, that he sent (b) vessels to Ophir, which, in one voyage, "brought him four hundred and fifty talents of gold, together with almug trees and precious stones;" and to Tarshish likewise, "which brought gold, and silver, and ivory, and apes, and peacocks;" and as by this means he came "to surpass all the kings of the earth for riches," it may be worth our while to enquire a little, where the places, which produced such plenty of wealth, were in ancient times situated, and both how, and by whom, a trade so very advantageous might probably be carried on.

From 1 Kings
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of 2 Chron.

Amidst the vast variety of opinions concerning the situation of these two famous places, Ophir and Tarshish, (c) the learned Grotius has suggested a good expedient, one would think, how to find them out; namely, by considering what commodities were brought from thence, and then enquiring of merchants, who have been in the remoter parts of the world, where not only gold and precious stones, but ivory likewise, and almug trees, and whatever else we read of, was brought from thence, is now to be found. But this expedient will not do; not only because the seats of traffic are frequently changing, and any country may, in time, be exhausted of the commodities it once abounded with; but because it is no easy matter to tell (by the imperfect description we have of them) of what distinct species some of these commodities were. (d) The almug tree, for instance, has been a puzzle to most interpreters; nor are they as yet agreed, whether it was the coral, ebony, brazil, pine, or citron-wood; nay, some will have it to have been no particular tree at all, but only a general name for any wood whatever that was excellent in its kind: And how then can those commodities, that are of so indefinite a signification, be any characteristic to the situation of any country?

Nor is there much more certainty to be gathered from the names of the places we are in quest of; for though it be allowed that Ophir was the country which at first was peopled by Ophir, one of Joktan's sons, who are said (e) to have inhabited the country from Mesha to Sephar, a mountain in the east; yet, where Mesha and Sephar are to be placed, we know no more than we do where Ophir lies. And, in like manner, though Tarshish may be supposed by some to be a town or country not far distant from Ophir, yet others will have it to be no proper name at all, but, by ships of Tarshish, or from Tarshish, understand no more than "vessels able to bear a long voyage," i. e. large merchant-ships, in opposition to small craft, intended for home-trade in navigable rivers. So incompetent are the marks whereby we may descry the true situation of these unknown places! And therefore we can expect no other, but that the conjectures of learned men about them should be widely distant.

In relation to the land of Ophir, which is more particularly under our enquiry, Josephus (and from him many others) places it in the Indies, in a country which he calls the Golden Coast, not unlikely the Chersonesus Aurea, known now by the name of Malacca, and a peninsula opposite to Sumatra. The learned Bochart contends hard for the isle Taphrobane, so famous among the ancients, which is now called Ceylon, and lies in the kingdom of Malabar, because this place (as he tells us) abounds with gold, ivory, and precious stones. Arias Montanus will needs remove it into Armenia; and, when Christopher Columbus at first discovered the island Hispaniola in 1492, he used to make his boasts, that he had found the Ophir of Solomon, because he perceived deep caverns in the earth, from whence he supposed that prince might have dug his gold. F. Calmet is no less singular in his opinion: He places Ophir somewhere in Armenia, not far from the sources of the Tygris and Euphrates; (f) and, to obviate the objection

(a) 1 Kings x. 25. (b) 2 Chron. ix. 10, 21, 22. (c) Patrick's Commentary on 1 Kings.
(d) Calmet's and Le Clerc's Commentaries. (e) Gen. x. 30. (f) Diss. sur le pays d'Ophir.

A. M. 3001.
&c. or 4421.
Ant. Chris.
1003. &c.
or 990.

of the country's not bordering on the sea, and not being at distance enough for a three years voyage, he supposes, that Solomon's fleet made a trading voyage of it; that in no one place it met with all the commodities it brought home; but on the coast of Ethiopia, took in apes, ebony, and parrots; in Arabia, ivory and spices; and at Ophir (or the place of traffic, where the people of Ophir resorted), gold: And though this Ophir might be no maritime country, yet this hinders not, says he, why the gold which it produced might not be brought by land-carriage to some part of the Tygris, or Euphrates, which at that time were a great way navigable. Grotius, as well as Calmet, is of opinion, that Solomon did not send his fleet to any part, either of the East or West Indies, but only to a part of Arabia (by Arrian called Aphar, by Pliny, Saphar, and by Ptolemy, Sapphera). situate on the main ocean; and that the Indians brought down their merchandises thither, to be bought by Solomon's factors, and shipped on board his fleet. And (to name no more) (a) Huetius, in his dissertation upon the subject, endeavours to persuade us, that Ophir lay upon the east coast of Afric, and, more particularly, was that small country which is called Sophala; that Solomon's fleet went out of the Red Sea, and, from the harbour of Ezion-Geber, entered into the Mediterranean by a canal of communication which joined the two seas; and that, having doubled the cape of Gudarfat, and coasted along the African shore, it came at length to Sophala, and there met with plenty of all the merchandise and curiosities that the Sacred History specifies.

[Mr Bruce, the celebrated traveller, has adopted the hypothesis of Huetius, and supported it by many ingenious and very plausible arguments, of which a satisfactory abstract may be seen in the Encyclopædia Britannica, (b) under the title *Ophir*. That hypothesis, however, is opposed, under the same title in the same work, by another learned and ingenious writer, who contends with equal ingenuity, and with still greater erudition, that the *Tarshish*, to which Solomon's fleets sailed, was the province of *Bætica* in Spain, which certainly abounded then with gold and silver and tin and lead; and that the *Ophir* of Solomon must have been situated somewhere on the coast of Africa, to the west of the Cape, because from it the course to *Tarshish* or *Tartessus* was more eligible than to return the same way back to *Ezion-Geber*. It is certain that the Phœnicians, at a very early period, traded to Spain, and even to Cornwall in England, and that they had doubled the Cape; and there is no doubt but that, from the coast of Africa and Spain, all the merchandise might have been imported that Solomon's ships are said to have brought from Ophir and Tarshish.]

Which of these conjectures (for conjectures they are all) make the nearest approaches to truth, it is hard to determine; only we may adventure to say, (c) that if any part of Arabia did furnish the world, in those days, with the best gold, and in the greatest quantity (as some good authors seem to say), they who would have the Ophir of the Holy Scriptures to be there situated, seem, of all others, to have the best foundation for their conjecture*; especially considering, that the use of the compass not being then known, the way of navigation was, in those days, by coasting, which would carry a ship into Afric much better than either into the East or West Indies.

Before the reign of king David (to enquire a little into this history of the Ophir trade among the Hebrews), the Hebrews did not much apply themselves to maritime affairs. From the time of Joshua, they had been almost perpetually engaged in wars, and therefore had no leisure or opportunity to think of navigation. The Tyrians and Phœnicians were then in possession of all the commerce of the Mediterranean; and on the main ocean the Hebrews had not the least footing, until David made a conquest of Idumea, and thereby became master of two sea-port towns on the Red Sea, Elah and

(a) *Calmet's Dictionary* under the word *Ophir*.
Connection, part i. lib. i.

(b) *Edition third.*

(c) *Prideaux's*

* [This is our author's opinion. My own is decided in favour of the west coast of Africa and Spain; but in the History of the Bible the question is of too little importance to deserve a particular discussion here.]

Ezion-Geber; and, seeing the advantage that might be made of the situation of these two places, wisely took the benefit of it, and there began this traffic.

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After the death of his father Solomon continued the trade to Ophir from these two ports, whither himself went in person; and having ordered more ships to be built, and the harbours to be repaired and fortified, he settled every thing else that might tend to the effectual carrying on of this traffic, not only to Ophir, but to all other parts to which the sea whereon those ports lay opened him a passage. But his chief care was to plant in these two towns such inhabitants as were best qualified to carry on his design; for which reason he brought thither, from the sea-coasts of Palestine, as many sailors as he could get, but especially of the Tyrians, with whom his good friend and ally king Hiram supplied him in great numbers: so that in a short time he drew to these two ports, and from thence to Jerusalem, all the trade of Africa, Arabia, Persia, and India, which was the chief fountain of the immense riches for which his reign was so renowned.

After the division of the kingdom, the kings of Judah, who kept possession of these ports in Idumea, still carried on the trade, especially from Ezion-Geber, which they chiefly made use of until the time of Jehoshaphat; who having prepared a fleet to go to Ophir, in conjunction with Ahaziah, king of Israel, had the misfortune to have them destroyed and dashed to pieces against a ridge of rocks which lay at the mouth of the harbour, before they could get to sea, which gave him such a distaste against the place, that, from thenceforward, the station of his ships was at Elah, for from thence we read of his setting out a fleet next year for Ophir.

(a) When Jehoram succeeded his father Jehoshaphat, God, for the punishment of his exceeding great wickedness, suffered the Idumeans to revolt from him; who, having expelled his viceroy, chose them a king of their own; and, under his conduct, regaining their ancient liberty, they soon recovered the two ports of Elah and Ezion-Geber: But even while they had them, there was an interruption in the Ophir-trade, until Uzziah, king of Judah, having retaken Elah in the beginning of his reign, fortified it a-new, peopled it with his own subjects, and restored the old traffic to Ophir, which continued all along until the wicked reign of Ahaz.

In the reign of Ahaz, Rezin, king of Damascus, being assisted by Pekah, king of Israel, took Elah by surprise; and having driven out the Jews that were settled there, put Syrians in their place, and was thinking of carrying on this trade, which the kings of Judah had been so enriched by, to his own advantage; when, the very next year, Tiglath-Pileser, king of Assyria, having, by the procurement of Ahaz, invaded Damascus, and conquered Rezin, took possession of Elah, and reserved the property of trade to himself: so that the Jews, from thenceforward, had never any portion in it, which proved a great diminution to their wealth.

How the Assyrians managed this traffic, while it continued in their hands, or where they fixed their principal mart for it, we are no where told. In process of time, we find it wholly engrossed by the Tyrians, who, from the same port of Elah, by way of a (b) town on the confines of Egypt and Palestine, made it all centre in Tyre, and from thence furnished all the western part of the world with the wares of Persia, India, Africa, and Arabia, to the great enriching of themselves, as long as the Persian empire subsisted, under the favour and protection of whose kings they enjoyed the full possession of this trade. (c) But when the Ptolemies prevailed in Egypt, by building several ports on the Egyptian or western side of the Red Sea (for Elah and Ezion-Geber lay on the eastern), and, by sending from thence fleets to all those countries where the Tyrians traded from Elah, they soon drew all this trade into their kingdom, and there

(a) *Prideaux's Connection*, part i. lib. i.
(c) *Prideaux*, *Ibid*.

(b) The town's name was Rhinocorura, *Strabo*, lib. xvi.

A. M. 3901, fixed the chief mart of it at Alexandria, where it continued for a great many ages, until a way was found out, (a) about three centuries ago, of sailing to those parts by the way of the Cape of Good Hope; after which, the Portuguese, for some time, managed this trade; but now the greatest share of it is fallen into the hands of the English and Dutch.

CHAPTER II.

FROM THE REIGN OF JEHOSHAPHAT TO THE SIEGE OF SAMARIA.

THE HISTORY.

A. M. 3001,
&c. or 4482.
Ant. Chris.
1003, &c. or
929.

AFTER the death of Asa, Jehoshaphat his son, when five and thirty years of age, succeeded him in the kingdom of Judah, and in all acts of piety, as well as the reformation of religion, imitated, if not excelled, † the former part of his father's reign. At his first accession to the throne he expressed his zeal for God's service, in the extirpation of those Sodomites, and the destruction of those idolatrous || high-places and groves which remained in his father's reign; and perceiving that the people were grossly ignorant of the law, (after he had fortified his frontier towns, and put his kingdom in a good posture of defence) he sent itinerant priests and Levites through all his dominions, with letters to the princes and heads of each family to receive them kindly, and to encourage them in expounding the law, and instructing his subjects in the knowledge of their duty.

By these means he soon gained the hearts of his people who, to support the dignity

(a) This happened Anno Dom. 1497.

† In 2 Chron. xvii. 3. mention is made of the first ways of his father David; but it may very well be questioned, whether the word David be not slipped in here, by the fault of some transcriber, in the place of Asa, because, 1 Kings xxii. 43. as likewise in 2 Chron. xx. 32. Asa is named and not David. Now it is very well known, that in the beginning of his reign Asa was very religious, but fell from his piety towards the conclusion of it; and therefore the sacred historian, by observing that Jehoshaphat followed his father in what he was in his first days, and not in his old age, might intend a just reflection upon Asa for his growing more negligent and remiss in the service of God towards the decline of his life. *Patrick's Commentary*, and *Howell's History*, in the Notes.

|| It is said of his father Asa likewise, that he removed the high places, together with the idols and

the groves, which his father and mother had made, 1 Kings xv. 12, &c. but then we are to observe (as we have noted before) that there were high places and groves of two sorts; some for the worship of the true God, which continued in Judah, even under religious princes; and others for the worship of idols, which good kings took away, even though they left the other standing. The high places and groves of this latter kind were those which Asa destroyed; but because, towards the conclusion of his reign, when he grew more infirm in body and more remiss in God's cause, some of his subjects (out of their vile attachment to idols) had made new ones, Jehoshaphat, upon his accession to the throne, had occasion enough to begin a reformation in this particular as well as many others. *Patrick's Commentary* on 1 Kings xviii. 30. and *Pool's Annotations* on 2 Chron. xvii. 6.

of his government, † brought him presents from every quarter, †² and struck such a terror into his enemies, that, instead of invading his dominions, the Philistines came voluntarily, and paid him a tribute which had been suspended for some years; and the Arabians (whose riches consisted in cattle) sent him always seven thousand seven hundred rams, and an equal number of he-goats, as an annual acknowledgment of their homage. For Jehoshaphat took care to make himself strong in arms as well as wealth, having an army of above eleven hundred thousand men, besides those that were in garrisons and such fortified places as he had well furnished with plenty of all military stores.

In short, Jehoshaphat was rich and happy, great and honourable, beloved by his subjects, and revered by his enemies; only there was this great blemish in his reign, that he †³ married his son Jehoram to Athalia, daughter to Ahab king of Israel, which both displeased God, and involved him and his family in sundry troubles: But of these hereafter.

This Ahab (as we said) was one of the wickedest princes, and the most abominable idolater that ever sat on the throne of Israel: For he not only continued the worship of the calves which Jeroboam had set up, but, having married Jezebel, the daughter of * Eth-baal, king of Tyre, to please this woman he introduced the idolatry paid to the *² god Baal, built him a temple in Samaria, erected an altar, and *³ made a grove, where all kinds of impurities were committed, the more effectually to proselyte the vicious

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† It was customary for subjects to make their oblations to their princes, especially at the commencement of their reigns. It is said of some disaffected people, that they brought Saul no presents, even though he had been recognised as king, 1 Sam. x. 27. But by the presents here spoke of, we may not improperly understand the tribute and customs which his subjects were obliged to pay him; only it was thought proper to call them presents, or voluntary gifts, as a name of a less odious sound and import than that of tributes. *Calmet's Commentary* on 2 Chron. xviii. 5.

†² His enemies could not but be sensible that it was in vain to assault him while he continued firm in his religion; for they must have observed, that the prosperity of all the kings of Judah depended on that, and that they never fell into the hands of their enemies but when they had first fallen from God. *Patrick's Commentary*.

†³ The only shadow of excuse that can be alleged in behalf of Jehoshaphat's marrying his son in this manner, might be a fond conceit, that in case Ahab should die without issue-male, he might have a chance to reunite the two kingdoms of Israel and Judah; but in this piece of worldly policy he found himself sadly disappointed. *Patrick's Commentary*.

* Eth-baal, or Ithobalus (as he is called by profane writers), does equally signify the strength of Baal. In the catalogue of the kings of Tyre he is said to be the eighth; and, as both Tyre and Sidon were from the beginning subject to the same king, it is not improbable that their kings resided sometimes at one and sometimes at the other city, and were therefore called the kings of Tyre or Sidon promiscuously. As the character of king and priest were frequently united in the same person, so is he supposed to have been the high priest of Astarte or Ashtaroth, the god-

dess of the Sidonians; and for this reason perhaps his daughter was so violently attached to that kind of idolatry, that when she came into power she was for utterly extirpating all the priests and prophets of the Lord. The truth is, this queen was a monster in her kind; and therefore the name of Jezebel has passed into a proverb, to denote any cruel, impious, and imperious woman. *Calmet's Commentary* on 1 Kings xvi. 31.

*² *Baal*, in the Hebrew tongue, signifies *lord*, and, as *Selden* observes, was anciently the name of the true God, until the world grew wicked and came to apply it to the sun; in after-ages to other stars; and in process of time to any of their kings whose memory was dear to them. The same author observes, that the Phœnician *Belus*; or *Baal*, was the same with the European *Jupiter*, and as *Sidon* was situated on the sea, their *Baal* was called by the Greeks the *Jupiter of the sea*. But more of this you may see in the writings of that great man. *Selden*, de Diis Syris.

*³ The Jewish law was so far from permitting men to plant any such groves, that it enjoins all its professors to destroy them. "Ye shall destroy their altars, and break down their images, and cut down their groves, and burn their graven images with fire," Deut. vii. 5. and therefore, though *Josephus* imputes the erection of these to the impiety of his wife *Jezebel*, who (as he tells us, *Jewish Antiq. lib. viii. c. 7.*) "was a woman of a bold enterprising humour, and of so impetuous and ungovernable a spirit, that she had the confidence to build a temple to *Baal*, the god of the Tyrians, to plant groves, for superstition, of all sorts of trees, and to appoint her priests and false prophets expressly for that idolatrous service;" yet her husband was nevertheless culpable for giving her that indulgence.

A. M. 3001, and debauched to a religion so agreeable to their lusts; and (as an instance of the da-
 &c or 4482. ring impiety of this age) one Hiel, who lived at Bethel, the famous seat of all idolatry,
 Ant. Chris. † adventured to rebuild Jericho, in defiance of the curse which Joshua had pronounced
 1003, &c. (above four hundred and fifty years before) against any man that should attempt it.
 or 929. But the presumptuous wretch found, to his cost, that Joshua's prediction was verified
 in him, when he saw his eldest son die as soon as he had begun the work, the rest of
 his children drop off as he continued it, and his youngest son taken away at last when
 he had completed it.

In the midst of this bold impiety, Israel, however, had the happiness to be blessed with an eminent prophet, Elijah the †² Tishbite, an inhabitant of Gilead, on the other side of Jordan; who, being grieved to see such a general apostacy from the true religion, || prayed earnestly to God, that he would lay bare his arm, and shew some visible token of his displeasure against so wicked a people: And accordingly, in a short time, he was sent to Ahab, to let him know that God intended to bring a sore famine (occasioned by want of rain) upon the land, which should last for above three whole years.

When the drought had continued some time, and the Divine threat began to operate, Elijah (by God's direction) retired to the †³ brook Cherith, where he concealed him-

† Jericho was one of the first places that Joshua took in the land of Canaan; and when he took it, he laid it under a *cherem* that it should never be rebuilt: But it is presumable, that as the Sacred History was then very little read, Hiel might either be ignorant of this interdict, or, being a professed idolater himself, might probably, at the instigation of Jezebel, or to gain the favour of the court, do it in defiance of God, and to let the world see, that whatever was denounced in his name was of no significance at all, and for this reason met with his condign punishment. *Patrick's* and *Calmet's* Commentaries.

†² Thesbe was a town on the other side of Jordan, in the tribe of Gad, and in the land of Gilead, where this prophet was born, or at least inhabited for some time. Since the Scripture makes no mention, either of the quality of his parents, the manner of his education, or his call to the prophetic office, some Jewish doctors have been of opinion that he was an angel sent from heaven, in the midst of the general corruption of the world, to preserve the true worship of God. Others pretend that he was a priest, descended from the tribe of Aaron; that his father's name was Sabaca, and his birth altogether miraculous: Whilst others again will needs have it, that he was Phineas, the son of Aaron, who, after having lived a long while concealed, appeared again in the world under the name of Elijah. But where the Scripture is silent, all particulars of this kind are of small authority. This, however, may be said with safety of him, that he was one of the chief, if not the prince of the prophets of his age; a man of a great and elevated soul, of a generous and undaunted spirit, a zealous defender of the laws of God, and a just avenger of the violations of his honour. *Calmet's* Commentary.

|| St James's words are these:—"Elias was a man subject to the like passions as we are; and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain, and it rained not on the earth for the space of three years and six months."

Our blessed Saviour makes mention of the like compass of time, Luke iv. 25.; and yet neither of these are contradictory to what the Sacred History tells us, viz. "That the word of the Lord came to Elijah in the third year," 1 Kings xviii. 1. For we must remember, that as Egypt had usually no rain, but was watered by the river Nile; so the land of Canaan had generally none except twice a year, which they called the early and latter rain. The former of these was in the month Nisan, which answers to our March; and the other in the month Marheshvan, which answers to our October. Now at the beginning of the drought, Ahab might very probably impute the want of rain to natural causes; but when, after six months, neither the former nor the latter rain fell in their season, he then began to be enraged at Elijah as the cause of the national judgment, and forced him, at God's command, to save his life by flight: And from that time the three years in the historian are to be computed, though from the first notice which Elijah gave Ahab of this approaching calamity to the expiration of it, were certainly three years and an half. This calamity is said to have been procured by Elijah's prayers: But we must not therefore imagine that his prayers were spiteful and malicious, but necessary rather, and charitable to the offenders; that, by the sharp and long affliction which they produced, God's honour, and the truth of his word and threatenings (which was now universally contemned) might be vindicated; and that the Israelites (whose present impunity hardened them in their idolatry) might hereby be awakened to see their wickedness, their dependance upon God, and the necessity of their returning to his religion and worship. *Bedford's* Scripture Chronology, lib. vi. c. 2. and *Pool's* Annotations.

†³ The brook Cherith, and the valley through which it runs, are both very near the river Jordan; but whether on the east or west side of the river, it is not so well agreed. Eusebius, or at least St Jerom,

self for the space of a whole year, and was miraculously fed by the ravens, which brought him bread and flesh twice every day, and for his drink he had the water of the brook; but when the water of the brook began to fail, God directed him to go to † Zarephtha, a town belonging to the territories of Sidon, where he had appointed a widow-woman to entertain him.

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The famine had spread itself over the country of Sidon as well as the land of Israel, and therefore, when the prophet drew near the town, he met the widow to whom he was directed; and when he requested her to give him a little water, and withal a morsel of bread, she solemnly protested to him that she had but an handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruise, and was come out to pick up some sticks wherewith to bake a cake * for her and her son, which was to be the last meal they were ever like to eat. But the prophet, encouraging her to do as he bid her, gave her assurance that her meal and her oil should not fail as long as the famine lasted; which accordingly proved true; for on that little store, she, and her son, and the prophet, lived for the space of two years; and when, in this space, her son fell sick and died, Elijah, by his prayers, restored him to life again; which †² gave the mother full conviction that he was a person extraordinary sent from God.

After he had lived in this obscurity for above two years, God commanded him to return to the land of Israel, and to present himself before Ahab, because, in a short time, he intended to send rain upon the earth. At this time the famine was so extreme about Samaria, that the king commanded *² Obadiah, one of the officers of his house-

places it beyond Jordan, and so on the east side of it; but others generally agree in placing it on the west side, because God, in sending away Elijah, says to him, "Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan," 1 Kings xvii. 3 where the expression, "turn thee eastward," seems to imply, that Elijah was on the west side of Jordan; for had he been on the east side, then to have gone to the brook, which ran on that side into Jordan, would have been to have turned westward. *Wells's Geography of the Old Testament*, vol. iii.

† Zarephtha, or, as it is called in the New Testament, Sarepta, was a town which lay between Tyre and Sidon, but somewhat nearer to the latter. Mr Maundrell (in his Journey from Aleppo to Jerusalem) observes, that it is the same with what is now called Sarphan, distant about three hours travel from Sidon in the way to Tyre. Whatever it was formerly, the same author tells us, that at present it consists of no more than a few houses, on the tops of the mountains, about half a mile from the sea; though there is reason to believe that the principal part of the city stood below, in a space between the hills and the sea, because there are still ruins there to be seen of a very considerable extent. *Wells's Geography of the New Testament*, part i. chap. 5. sect. 2.

* Some of the Hebrew doctors (and herein they are followed by some Christians) are of opinion, that this widow's son was the prophet Jonas; that, after his restoration, his mother gave him to Elijah; that ever after he attended on the prophet as long as he lived; and, on a certain occasion, was dispatched by him to Nineveh, as every one knows. But, besides that these traditions are destitute of any real proof, Jonah was an Hebrew, as he himself declares, ch. i. 9. and a native of Gath-hepher, as we read 2 Kings

xiv. 25. whereas this widow's son was a native of Zarephtha, a town belonging to the kingdom of Sidon, and by birth a stranger to the race of Israel. *Calmet's Commentary*.

†² The woman had sufficient reason to believe that Elijah was a prophet or person sent from God, when she saw the miraculous increase of the meal and oil; but upon his not curing her son when he lay sick, but rather suffering him to die, her faith began to droop; whereas, upon seeing him revive, her faith revived with him; and, through the joy of having him restored to her again, she accounted this latter miracle much greater than the former. *Le Clerc's Commentary*.

*² There are some Jewish doctors who think that this Obadiah was the same with him whose writings we have among the twelve minor prophets. They pretend that he was married to that woman of Shunem, where Elisha used to lodge; that he was a disciple of the prophet Elijah, and the last of the three captains whom king Ahaziah sent to apprehend him; and that for this reason he had compassion on him, though he destroyed the others that came before him with fire from heaven, 2 Kings i. 9, &c. but all these things are pure Apocrypha. Obadiah himself, in his discourse with Elijah, sufficiently tells us who he was, viz. a person truly religious, who worshipped God alone, and had a singular affection for his servants; enough, one would think, to have made Ahab discard, if not persecute him, had he not found him so highly useful in the management of his domestic affairs, as to connive at his not worshipping Baal, or the calves; especially since we read nothing of his going up to Jerusalem, which was a defect that God perhaps might think proper to dispense with. *Calmet's and Patrick's Commentaries*.

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hold, and some others with him, to go all over the country in quest of some forage for the subsistence of his cattle; and, to see that his orders were fully executed, himself went along with some of them. Obadiah, of all the king's domestics, was the most religious. He, in the time of Jezebel's † persecuting the prophets of the Lord, concealed an hundred of them, by fifty in a cave, and there sustained them with necessaries. When Elijah met him, Obadiah saluted him with great respect; but when the prophet required him to go and acquaint the king that he was there, and desired to speak with him, Obadiah at first excused himself, upon apprehension that Elijah might vanish, and leave him the object of the king's indignation, who had taken such vast pains to find him out; but when the other assured him that he would not stir, he went and brought the king to him. The king, at the first interview, began to upbraid him with being the cause of the calamity that the nation suffered; but Elijah boldly returned the charge, and having taxed him with the worship of false gods, (which was the source of all their woe) he undertook to prove that they were no more than false gods, if so be the king would be pleased to summon all the people to meet upon Mount Carmel, and to bring thither the four hundred and fifty priests of Baal, together with the four hundred priests of Astarte, who were supported at Jezebel's table. *

Elijah had told Ahab, that (a) "there should be neither dew nor rain upon the earth, but according to his word;" and therefore the king being persuaded, perhaps, that the national remedy was in his hands, neglected not to issue out writs for the convention of the people, and ordered the priests to attend. When they were all met together, Elijah, having first upbraided them with their vile prevarication in mixing the worship of God and the worship of Baal together, made them a fair proposal to this effect. "Since there can be no more than one Infinite, Supreme, Almighty, and Independent Being, let us, at this time, make the experiment who this Being is. You, who are the worshippers of Baal, have all the advantages on your side, the favour and protection of the court, four hundred and fifty priests of one kind, and four hundred of another; whereas I, who am the manager of God's cause, am but one poor banished man; and yet let two oxen be brought before us. Let the priests of Baal chuse their ox, dress it, cut it in pieces, lay it on the altar, but let there be no fire thereon; and I, in like manner, will do so to my ox. Let them pray unto their gods, and I likewise will call on the name of Jehovah; and then let the God, who, by consuming the sacrifice †² with a sudden flash of fire, shall make it appear that he hath heard the prayers, be owned by this whole assembly to be this one, this true, supreme, independent Being."

This was a proposal that none could gainsay; and therefore the priests of Baal prepared their altar, sacrificed their bullock, placed it on the altar, and began to call upon their god: But Baal continuing deaf to their invocations, they betook themselves to

† Elijah, in his appeal to the people, tells them, "I, even I only remain a prophet of the Lord," 1 Kings xviii. 22. and therefore we can hardly imagine, that all these hundred, whom Obadiah preserved, were men actually inspired and invested with a prophetic character, but such only as were the disciples of the prophets, and candidates for that office; for it is not unlikely, that, even to Jezebel's time, there were remaining in Israel schools of the prophets which she endeavoured to destroy, as well as those that were bred up in them, that there might none be left to instruct the people in the true religion. These she certainly looked upon as enemies to her idolatry, and might possibly persuade her husband that they were disaffected to his government, and favourers of the kings of Judah, because they worshipped the same God, and thought that the proper place of his

worship was Jerusalem; and therefore the greater was the piety and courage of Obadiah, in rescuing so many victims from the hands of this furious and enraged woman. *Patrick's* and *Le Clerc's* Commentaries.

(a) 1 Kings xvii. 1.

†² This is not the first time wherein God had declared his approbation of his worshippers by sending down fire to consume their sacrifices, Lev. ix. 24. and Judg. vi. 21. and though perhaps it may be possible for evil spirits, who may have great knowledge how to manage meteors and exhalations to their purposes, to make fire descend from the clouds; yet, since they can do nothing without a Divine permission, it is absurd to think, that in a matter of competition between him and false gods, he should give evil spirits any licence to rival him in his miracles. *Le Clerc's* Commentary.

odd gesticulations. They sometimes jumped over the altar, sometimes danced round it, and (according as their custom was) began * to cut themselves with knives and lancets; but all to no purpose: Whereupon the true prophet *² fell a bantering and ridiculing them (as justly he might), but their senseless idol knew nothing of the matter.

From 1 Kings viii. to the end of 2 Chron.

This farce of devotion they continued till the day was above half spent; when Elijah, desiring the people to draw near, and taking twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes, *³ repaired the altar of the Lord which had been broken down, and then laying his bullock on the wood, † poured a great quantity of water three times on the sacrifice, on the wood, and on the altar; so that the water filled the trench which was dug round the altar to receive it. It was now much about the time of offering the evening sacrifice, when, having prepared all things, he approached the altar, and prayed in this manner: "Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, shew this day that thou art the God of Israel, that I am thy servant, and that it is by thy commandment that I have done this thing. †² Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that these people may under-

* A strange method, one would think, to obtain the favour of their gods! And yet, if we look into antiquity, we shall find, that nothing was more common in the religious rites of several nations than this barbarous custom. To this purpose we may observe, that (as Plutarch, de Superstitione, tells us) the priests of Bellona, when they sacrificed to that goddess, were wont to besmear the victim with their own blood; that the Persian Magi (according to Herodotus, lib. vii. c. 191.) used to appease tempests, and allay the winds, by making incisions in their flesh; that they who carried about the Syrian goddess, (as Apuleius, lib. viii. relates) among other mad pranks, were, every now and then, cutting and slashing themselves with knives, till the blood gushed out; and that even to this day, some modern travellers tell us, that in Turkey, Persia, and several parts of the Indies, there are a kind of fanatics, who think they do a very meritorious thing, and what is highly acceptable to the Deity, in cutting and mangling their own flesh. "Dii autem nullo debent coli genere (says Seneca, as he is quoted by St Austin de Civ. Dei, lib. vi. c. 10.) si et hoc volunt. Tantus est perturbatæ mentis, et ædibus suis pulsæ furor, ut sic dii placeantur, quæmodum ne homines quidem sæviunt teterrimi, et in fabulas traditæ crudelitatis, &c." *Calmet's and Le Clerc's Commentaries.*

*² The words of the prophet are very cutting and sarcastical. "Cry aloud, for he is a god" no doubt, though he may be somewhat deaf, or a great way off, so that he cannot hear unless you cry aloud; or "either he is talking" about business, or "pursuing his pleasures;" or perhaps "he is in a journey and not at home;" or "peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awakened." The two last notions, "of being asleep, and not at home," how absurd soever they may be when applied to the Deity, were certainly such as several idolaters conceived of their gods, as appears from these passages in Homer. In the former of these, Thetis, says he, cannot meet with Jupiter, because he was gone abroad, and would not return in less than twelve days.

Ζεύς γὰρ ἐπ' ἄκκων, μετ' ἀμύμονας Ἀιθιοπῆας,
Χθρὸς ἔσθ' ἀπὸ δαΐτας, οἷοι δ' ἅμα πάντες ἔποντο,
Δωδεκάτῃ δὲ τοι αὖθις ἐλεύσεται οὐλομένηδε.

Iliad. i. lin. 423.

And in the conclusion of that book, he shews us in what manner the gods went to sleep.

Ζεὺς δὲ πρὸς ὃν λέχος ἦν Ὀλύμπιος ἀστεροπήτης,
Ἐνθα πάρος κοιμαῖ, ὅτε μιν γλυκὺς ὕπνος ἱκανός
Ἐνθα κίβευδ' ἀναδᾷς, παρὰ δὲ χρυσόθρονος Ἑρμῆ.

*³ The altar, which the sacred author here calls "the altar of the Lord," was certainly one of those which were built in the time of the judges and first kings of Israel; when, for want of a fixt place of worship, such structures were permitted. Both Tacitus, lib. ii. c. 74. and Suetonius speak of the god of Carmel, whom Vespasian went to consult when he was at Judea. His priest Basilides promised him all manner of prosperity and success in his undertakings; but (as the two historians tell us) there was neither temple nor statue upon the mountain, but one altar only, plain, but very venerable for its antiquity. Some are of opinion, that this Basilides was a Jew, and priest of the Most High God; but it seems more reasonable that he was a Pagan priest, and probably the same who met Vespasian in the temple of Serapis in Egypt. However this be, the altar of Carmel seems to have had its original from this altar of the true God, which the ancient Hebrews first erected, and Elijah afterwards repaired; which even the heathens held in such veneration, that when they came to be masters of the country they would not place so much as an image by it. *Calmet's Commentary.*

† This the prophet did to make the miracle more conspicuous and convincing; to show that there was no fallacy in it, no fire concealed in or about the altar, but that the lightning, which was to consume the sacrifice, came from heaven, and came at his invocation; for so Josephus tells us, that Elijah invited the people to draw near, even that they might search, and spy every where, if they could find any fire that was secretly conveyed under the altar. *Jewish Antiq. lib. viii. c. 7. Calmet's and Le Clerc's Commentaries.*

†² He was the more earnest and fervent in his prayer (as Abarbanel thinks), because he had undertaken to make the experiment of God's power on his own accord, and without any particular command from him, nothing doubting but that he would appear to vindicate his own honour, even though he of-

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stand, that thou art the Lord God, and that their hearts may be converted from their idol unto thee." And no sooner had he ended this short prayer, but a fire fell from heaven, and consumed not only the burnt-offering, but the wood and stones, nay, the very dust of the place, and the water that was in the trench; insomuch, that when they saw the miracle, they fell on their faces, and in admiration and acknowledgment of it, owned that the God of Elijah was the true God: Whereupon he ordered them to seize on the priests of Baal as a pack of cheats and imposters, to carry them down from the mountain, and to slay them all at the brook Kishon.

After this just execution was finished, the prophet returned to the top of the mountain, from whence he might view the Mediterranean Sea; where, having prayed for rain, he sent his servant seven times to see if he could perceive any appearance of it: And he at last brought him back word, that he saw a small cloud rising out of the sea, no bigger (to look at) than a man's hand; whereupon he commanded him immediately to go to Ahab, and to advise him to hasten to his chariot, and make the best of his way home lest the rain should stop him. The king took his advice, and the prophet, having † girded up his vest about him, ran all the way before him to Jezreel.

As soon as queen Jezebel understood what Elijah had done, and more especially how he had caused all the prophets of Baal to be slain, she vowed revenge, and †² sent him word, that his life the next day should certainly pay for theirs; whereupon, not thinking himself safe in Ahab's dominions, he withdrew to a town, in the southern part of the tribe of Judah, called Beersheba, where he dismissed his servant, and, pursuing his journey farther into Arabia Petræa, walked all day: But in the evening, being extremely fatigued, he laid himself down under a juniper-tree, sick with the world, and desirous to leave it. He had not however slept long before an angel, who had brought him meat and drink, awoke him, and bade him eat heartily, because he had a long journey to take. The prophet did as he was ordered, and, in the strength of that repast, walked || forty days and forty nights, until he came to Mount Horeb, the place where God at

fered sacrifices on an high place, which was not agreeable to the law. *Patrick's Commentary.* [That Elijah would undertake to make such an experiment as this of his own accord, is very little probable; and we learn from himself that on this occasion he acted by the Divine command. His prayer is a proof of this. "Lord God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day, that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that *I have done all these things at thy word.*" He prayed with great earnestness, for a reason similar to that which induced our Lord publicly to thank his Father for hearing him at the grave of Lazarus; viz. "that the people who stood by might believe that God had sent him."]

† In this country loose and long garments were in use; and therefore, when the people were minded to run or to make any great expedition, their custom was to gird them round their waist: But why the prophet condescended to become, as it were, the king's running footman upon this occasion, was to shew the world, that his extraordinary power in working miracles, and the conquest he had thereby gained over his enemies, had not made him proud; and to satisfy the king of his readiness to do him all the honour imaginable; that he was far from being his enemy, and only desired he would become the true worshipper of God, who was (as he could not but see) the Lord God of Israel. *Patrick's Commentary.*

†² This certainly was the effect of her blind rage, and not of any prudence in her: For prudence would have advised her to conceal her resentment until she had been ready to put her designs in execution; whereas this sending him word was giving him notice of his danger, and admonishing him to avoid it. But since he had had the confidence to come where she was, she might think, perhaps, that he was as courageous as she was furious; that upon this notice he would scorn to fly; and she too, in her pride, might scorn to kill him secretly or surreptitiously, resolving to make him a public sacrifice. *Patrick's Commentary, and Pool's Annotations.*

|| From Beersheba to Mount Horeb is, at the most, not above one hundred and fifty miles, and the prophet, it seems, had advanced one day's journey into the wilderness; so that he had not now more to finish than any active man might have done in four or five days at most. How came the prophet then to make forty of it? To this some reply, that he, as the Israelites of old, was kept wandering up and down this pathless wilderness forty days, as they were forty years, till at length he hit upon this sacred mountain. Others suppose, that he went about by private ways, and perhaps sometimes rested, and lay hid, in order to prevent discovery. But when he was got into the wilderness, one would think he might have been safe, and proceeded straight-way (if he knew the straight way) to the place intended. I was thinking, there-

first delivered the law to Moses. Here he betook himself to a cave, intending very probably to spend the remainder of his days in retirement; but he had not been long in the place before he had a vision, wherein God, having first, by several † emblems, made him sensible of his Almighty power and presence, gave him to understand, that the number of his true worshippers was greater than he imagined, and that he would not fail to take vengeance on the house of Ahab for their abominable idolatry. To this purpose he ordered him to return into his own country by the way of Damascus, where he was to anoint Hazael, king of Syria; Jehu, king of Israel; and to appoint Elisha his successor in the prophetic office; intimating hereby, that these men †² would be proper instruments, in his Almighty band, whereby to punish the idolatry of Israel, and to assert the righteousness of his own cause.

This was a matter of some comfortable expectation to Elijah; and therefore, leaving Horeb, in his return by the way of Damascus * he found Elisha at plough, and, as he

From 1 Kings viii. to the end of 2 Chron.

fore, that there would be no solecism, if we should say, that the time of going to, staying at, and coming from the Mount of Horeb, is to be included in these forty days, though in a short narration words may be so expressed, as if the journey only had taken up all that time. *Patrick's*, *Calmet's*, and *Le Clerc's* Commentaries.

† Elijah being now come to the same place where God had delivered the law to his servant Moses, God was minded to communicate the like favour to his servant the prophet, viz. to unveil his majesty to him, and give him some signal of his immediate presence. But there is something very remarkable in the words of the text:—"And behold the Lord passed by, and a strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks, but the Lord was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a small still voice, 1 Kings xix. 11, &c. And various are the speculations which this appearance of the Divine Majesty hath suggested to interpreters. The generality of them have looked upon this as a figure of the Gospel Dispensation, which came, not in such a terrible manner as the law did, with storms, thunders, lightnings, and earthquakes, (Exod. xix. 16.) but with great lenity and sweetness, wherein God speaks to us by his Son, who makes use of no other but gentle arguments and soft persuasions. But if we take this to be a symbolical admonition to Elijah, according to the circumstances he was then in, we may reasonably suppose, that herein God intended to shew him, that though he had all the elements ready armed at his command to destroy idolaters, if he pleased to make use of them, yet he had rather attain his end by patience, and tenderness, and long-suffering (signified by that small still voice wherein the Deity exhibited himself), and consequently, that the prophet should hereby be incited to imitate him, bridling that passionate zeal to which his natural complexion did but too much incline. *Le Clerc's*, *Calmet's*, and *Patrick's* Commentaries.

† The words in the text are,—"And it shall come to pass, that him that escapeth the sword of Hazael shall Jehu slay; and him that escapeth from the sword of Jehu shall Elisha slay," 1 Kings xix. 17. Where

it is easy to observe, that these things are not mentioned according to the order of time wherein they fell out (for Elisha was prophet before Hazael was king, and Hazael was king before Jehu), but they are spoken of according to the decree of God, who (as Abarbinel observes) appointed every one to execute that which was proper for him to do: "Thus he intended (continues that learned commentator) that Hazael should destroy the idolaters of Israel in battle, and therefore he mentions that first, because it is a general calamity; but as Jezebel, the children of Ahab, and the priests of Baal went not to fight, and consequently could not fall in battle, he ordained Jehu to cut off them, and all the worshippers of Baal, in the manner that we find he did: But as he did not know the disposition of little children, he left them to be punished by Elisha, who, by the Spirit of prophecy, foresaw that they would become idolaters." But in this there seems to be more subtilty than needs, since the plain sense of the words is no more than this:—"That God, in his Providence, had appointed three persons to punish the Israelites according to their deserts; and that one or other of these should infallibly execute his judgments upon them." The only difficulty is, how the prophet Elisha can be said to slay, when by profession he was a pacific man, and never engaged in war? But when we consider the two and forty children which he destroyed, besides others, whom, upon the like occasion, he might destroy; the sore famine which, by God's appointment, he sent upon the Israelites, 2 Kings vi. 25. and the many cutting prophecies and comminations (called in Scripture the "sword of the mouth," Isa. xlix. 2. and Rev. i. 16.) which he denounced against them, and were fulfilled, we shall find reason enough to justify the expression. *Pool's* Annotations.

* So far was this from being an argument of his poverty, that it was in reality a token of his wealth and great riches: For he who could keep twelve yoke of oxen at plough, was in this respect no inconsiderable man, and yet (according to the manner of these early times) he looked after his own business himself; for nothing was of greater esteem, not only among the Hebrews, but among the ancient Greeks and Romans likewise, than agriculture; and such persons as were of the best quality were called *ἀγρονομοί*, "men

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passed by, † cast his mantle upon him ; which the other understanding to be a call to the prophetic ministry, as soon as he had settled his private concerns, went with Elijah, and was his servant as long as he lived ; so that Elijah did not think it necessary to go to Damascus upon the account of Hazeel, nor to speak with Jehu in Israel, but left these affairs to be transacted by Elisha whenever a fit opportunity should offer.

Not long after this (but upon what provocation it is not said), Benhadad raised a vast army against Ahab king of Israel, and marched directly into his country, with a design to invest Samaria his capital city. But before he did that, he sent him an haughty message, demanding all that belonged to him in satisfaction for some presumed affront. Ahab was in no condition to oppose him, and therefore he tamely submitted himself to his mercy : But this tameness only inflamed Benhadad's insolence, so that, in his next message, he demanded all things to be immediately put into his hand ; which when the king of Israel understood, he called a general council of the kingdom to advise what to do. They unanimously agreed to stand by their king to the last extremity ; which, when Benhadad's ambassadors told him, he fell into a great rage, and immediately ordered his army to invest Samaria ; but, while he lay before the town, God, who was justly provoked at this proud Syrian, sent †² a prophet to Ahab, not only to assure him of victory, but to instruct him likewise †³ in what method he was to obtain it ; which succeeded so well, that Benhadad himself had much to do to escape with his life.

The same prophet however gave the king of Israel great caution to recruit his army, and be upon his guard against the beginning of the next year, because then the Syrians designed him another visit ; which accordingly came to pass. For some of his generals having persuaded the king of Syria, that the gods of the Israelites * were gods

who did their work themselves," and left not the care of it to others. Elisha therefore was taken from the plough to be a prophet, in like manner as, among the Romans afterwards, some were taken from thence to be consuls and dictators. *Patrick's Commentary.*

† The mantle was the proper habit of prophets, 2 Kings i. 8. and therefore Elijah's casting it upon him was the ceremony here used for his inauguration : Though, as it was customary for servants to carry their masters garments after them, others understand it only as a token that Elisha was to be his servant, to attend upon him, and succeed in his office. However this be, it is probable, that when he cast his mantle upon him, he said something to Elisha, whereby he acquainted him with his design, though the particular words, in so short an history, are not expressed. *Pool's Annotations, and Le Clerc's Commentary.*

†² Who the prophet was, who upon this, and another message afterwards, was sent to Ahab, the Scriptures nowhere informs us. It is somewhat odd, that during this whole war with Benhadad, neither Elijah, nor Elisha, the two principal prophets of Israel, should appear, though other prophets (whereof there seems to be a considerable number) make no scruple of executing their office ; whether it was, that this war commenced before Jezebel's persecution of the prophets, or that this impious queen abated her persecution, and let them have some respite, when she had exterminated Elijah as she thought. *Calmet's Commentary.*

†³ The instruments in attaining this victory were to be the young men of the princes of the provinces, with Ahab at the head of them, 1 Kings xx. 14. The Hebrew word has some ambiguity in it, and may sig-

nify either the sons or the servants of the princes of the provinces, either young noblemen themselves, or their fathers' pages, who were equally brought up delicately, and quite unaccustomed to war. It was by these young men, and not by old experienced officers, that this battle was to be won ; that thereby it might appear that the victory was wholly owing to God's gracious and powerful Providence, and not to the valour or fitness of the instruments. *Pool's Annotations.*

* That there were many gods, who had each their particular charge and jurisdiction ; that some presided over whole countries, whilst others had but particular places under their tuition and government ; and were some of them gods of the woods, others of the rivers, and others of the mountains, was plainly the doctrine of all heathen nations. Pan was reckoned the god of the mountains, for which reason he was styled *Ορειβάτης* ; and in like manner, the Syrians might have a conceit, that the God of Israel was a god of the mountains, because Canaan (they saw) was a mountainous land ; the Israelites (they perceived) delighted to sacrifice on high places ; their law (they might have heard) was given on the top of a mountain ; their temple stood upon a famous eminence, as did Samaria, where they had so lately received a signal defeat. For their farther notion was, that the gods of the mountains had a power to inject a panic fear into an army whenever they pleased. Nay, that they did not only assist with their influence, but actually engage themselves in battle in behalf of their favourites, is a sentiment as old as Homer, and what Virgil has not forgot to imitate.

Omnigenumque Deum monstra, et latrator Anubis,

of the hills, and therefore, to fight them with advantage, was to fight them in a champion country, he raised another army of equal force with what he had lost the year before, and came and sat down before Apheck, a city in the tribe of Asher. Ahab, however, was prepared to receive him; and, though with a force far inferior to the Syrians, marched out to meet them; gave them battle, put them to the rout, and slew upon the spot an hundred thousand of them.

The vanquished † betook themselves to Apheck, but were far from finding any security there; for the Providence of God pursued them, and, by the fall of the walls of that city, destroyed seven and twenty thousand more of them: So that, terrified with this judgment, Benhadad went to hide himself in some place, where he thought he could not easily be found; but was at length prevailed on by his chief officers to send ambassadors to Ahab in the humblest manner, cloathed in †² sack-cloth, and with ropes about their necks, to make their submission upon what conditions he pleased. The conditions that Ahab insisted on were only, that the Syrians should restore all the country which they had taken from Baasha king of Israel, and grant †³ him some privileges in Damascus their capital, as a token of their homage and subjection; which the other very readily consented to, and so a league was concluded between them: But a league so offensive to God, that he sent a prophet immediately to reprove Ahab for it, and to let him know, "That, had he destroyed Benhadad, (as God had put it in his power) his dominions should have been annexed to the kingdom of Israel; but that, || since he had acted otherwise, his life should pay for the life of Benhadad: For he should be slain in battle with the Syrians, who, instead of being held in subjection to the Israelites, should,

From 1 Kings
viii. to the end
of 2 Chron.

Contra Neptunum, et Venerem, contraque Miner-
væ

Tela tenent; sævit medio in certamine Mavors
Cælatus ferro, tristesque ex æthere Diræ,
Et scissâ gaudens vadit discordia Pallâ,
Quam cum sanguineo sequitur Bellona flagello.

Æneid viii.

† Apheck, or Aphaca, (as it is called by profane authors) was situated in Libanus, upon the river Adonis, between Heliopolis and Biblos; and, in all probability, is the same that Paul Lucas, in his voyage du Levant, vol. i. chap. xx. speaks of as swallowed up in a lake of Mount Libanus, about nine miles in circumference, wherein there are several houses, all entire, to be seen under water. The soil about this place (as the ancients tell us) was very bituminous, which seems to confirm their opinion, who think, that subterraneous fires consumed the solid substance of the earth whereon the city stood, so that it subsided and sunk at once, and a lake was soon formed in its place. *Calmet's Commentary and Dictionary* under the word *Apheck*.

†² This was the posture in those times, wherein supplicants presented themselves when they petitioned for mercy. The sack-cloth upon their loins was a token of great sorrow for what they had done; and the halters about their necks, a token of their subjection to whatever punishment Ahab should think fit to inflict upon them: For which reason Bessus (according to Curtius, lib. vii.) was brought to Alexander with a chain about his neck. *Patrick's and Calmet's Commentaries*.

†³ The privilege which Benhadad gave to Ahab is thus expressed:—"Thou shalt make streets for thee in Damascus, as my father made in Samaria;" but

then the learned are not agreed what we are to understand by streets. Some suppose that they were courts of judicature, where Ahab was to maintain a jurisdiction over Benhadad's subjects. Others think that they were public market-places, where commodities were sold, and the toll of them paid to Ahab; but the most general opinion is, that they were citadels or fortifications, to be a bridle and restraint upon this chief city of the Syrians, that they might make no new irruptions into the land of Israel. A great privilege this! but what Benhadad, when he found himself set at liberty, refused to comply with. *Patrick's and Calmet's Commentaries*.

|| If it should be asked, wherein lay Ahab's great offence, for which God threatens to punish him so severely? The answer is,—That it consisted in suffering so horrid a blasphemer, as Benhadad was, to go unpunished, which was contrary to an express law, Lev. xxiv. 16. If it should be urged, that this was nothing to Benhadad, since the law concerned the Israelites only, the reply is,—That this law extended not to those only that were born in the land, but (as it is there expressed) to strangers likewise that were among them, and in their power, as Benhadad certainly was. God had delivered him into Ahab's hands for his blasphemy, as he had promised, 1 Kings xx. 28. and therefore this act of Providence, compared with the law, did plainly intimate, that he was appointed by God for destruction: But so far was Ahab from punishing him as he deserved, that he treats him like a friend and a brother, dismisses him upon easy terms, and takes his bare word for the performance, without the least care for the reparation of God's honour. *Pool's Annotations*.

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in a few years, (as they were in the reign of Hazael) become their masters, take their towns from them, and make ravages in their country." But, instead of humbling himself at the denunciation of this heavy sentence, or expressing any sorrow for his fault, Ahab became but more sullen and obstinate, and, in a short time, † added this farther offence to his other great crimes.

Not far from the royal palace of Jezreel, in a place convenient for a kitchen-garden, there was one Naboth a citizen thereof, who had a vineyard, which Ahab was very desirous of obtaining, and therefore †² offered the owner of it an equivalent, either in land or money; but the owner, †³ upon the account of its being his paternal inheritance, refusing to part with it, gave Ahab such uneasiness, that he took his bed for mere discontent, and was so sullen and uneasy that he would not eat his meat. But when his wife Jezebel came to understand the cause, she first upbraided him with his pusillanimity, or not knowing how to exert the authority of a king, and then (to cheer him up) bid him drive away all melancholy, for that she had found out an expedient how to put him in the possession of Naboth's vineyard. To this purpose she wrote letters from Samaria in Ahab's name, and sealed them with his signet, to the principal men in Jezreel, ordering them †⁴ to proclaim a fast, to bring †⁵ Naboth before the judges, and to suborn two false witnesses who should depose against him, that he had †⁶ blasphemed

† The account of Ahab's coveting Naboth's vineyard (as Abarbinel observes) is immediately set after his treatment of Benhadad, to shew his extreme great wickedness in sparing him (as Saul did Agag king of the Amalekites) and killing Naboth, that he might get possession of his vineyard: for this was an high aggravation of his crime, that he basely murdered a just Israelite, and let an impious enemy escape. *Patrick's Commentary*.

†² By this it appears, that though the kings of Israel did rule their subjects in a very arbitrary and despotic manner, yet they did not as yet take the liberty to seize on their lands and hereditaments; and therefore what Samuel prophesies of the kings of Israel, that "they would take their fields, their vineyards, and their olive-yards," 1 Sam. viii. 14. does not extend to any true and lawful, but a presumed and usurped right only in their kings. *Calmet's Commentary*.

†³ As it is natural to all men to love and value the ancient possessions that have been in their family, so the law of Moses prohibited the alienation of lands from one tribe or family to another, unless a man was reduced to poverty; in which case he might sell it to the jubilee, but then it was to revert to him again, Lev. xxv. 15, 25, 28. Now, as Naboth was in no need to sell his vineyard, so he considered with himself, that if, merely to do the king a pleasure, he should part with it out of his hands, especially to be made a garden, and so annexed to the palace, neither he nor his posterity should be ever able to recover it again; so that in this act he should both offend God and injure his posterity, which he, being a pious and religious man, durst not adventure to do. *Pool's Annotations*.

†⁴ It was always a customary thing, upon the approach of any great calamity, or the apprehension of any national judgment, to proclaim a fast; and Jezebel ordered such a fast to be observed in Jezreel, the better to conceal her design against Naboth. For

by this means she intimated to the Jezreelites, that they had some accursed thing among them, which was ready to draw down the vengeance of God upon their city; and that therefore it was their business to enquire into all those sins which provoked God to anger against them, and to purge them out effectually. As therefore these days of fasting were employed in punishing offenders, doing justice, and imploring God's pardon, they gave the elders of the city an occasion to convene an assembly, and the false witnesses a fair opportunity to accuse Naboth before them. *Le Clerc's and Patrick's Commentaries*.

†⁵ Josephus is of opinion, that as Naboth was of an illustrious house, he was ordered to be set in an honourable place among the elders and chief rulers of the city; that so it might be thought, that they did not condemn him out of hatred or ill-will, but merely as they were constrained to it by the evidence that was given against him. But others will have it, that the reason why he was set in an eminent place, was only because persons accused and arraigned were wont to stand conspicuous before their judges, that all the people might see them, and hear both the accusations against them and their defence. *Patrick's Commentary*.

†⁶ By the law of Moses it was death to blaspheme God, Lev. xxiv. 16. and by custom it was death to revile the king, Exod. xxii. 28. Now, in order to make safe work, the evidences (as they were instructed) accused Naboth of both these crimes, that the people might be the better satisfied to see him stoned. There is this difference, however, to be observed between these two crimes, that if a man had only blasphemed God, he was to be tried by the great court at Jerusalem, (as the Hebrew doctors tell us) and his goods came to his heirs; whereas, when a man was executed for treason against the king, his estate went to the exchequer, and was forfeited to him against whom the offence was committed: and for this reason it was that they accused Naboth of this crime

God and the king, that so he might be carried out of the city and stoned. † All this was done according to this wicked woman's desire; and as soon as Ahab understood that Naboth was dead, he went to Jezreel and took possession of his vineyard; but upon his return to Samaria, the prophet Elijah, by God's directions, met him; * and having upbraided him with this his last flagitiousness in slaying the innocent, and seizing on his inheritance, he denounced this heavy sentence against him,—“That in the same manner that dogs had licked Naboth's blood, they should lick his; that all his posterity should die by the sword, and be exposed without the honour of a decent funeral; and that, as to his wife Jezebel, she should be devoured by dogs near the wall of Jezreel,” i. e. || where Naboth was judged, and unjustly condemned.

From 1 Kings viii. to the end of 2 Chron.

Uneasy at the sight of the prophet, and much more terrified at his denunciations, Ahab rent his clothes, put on sack-cloth, and gave other indications of his sorrow and humiliation; but, as his repentance was neither sincere, nor persevering, God (who might otherwise have revoked the whole sentence) inflicted part of it upon his person; but the utter extirpation of his family did not happen till the reign of his son Ahaziah, as we shall see in its proper place.

Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, (as we said before) had imprudently married his son and heir to this wicked Ahab's daughter; and as this alliance occasioned an interview between the two kings, Jehoshaphat went one day to Samaria to visit Ahab, who entertained him and his attendants very splendidly; but, taking the advantage of this opportunity, invited him to go along with him to the siege of Ramoth-Gilead, a town in the tribe of Gad, which the king of Syria unjustly detained from him. Jehoshaphat agreed to attend him; but, being loth to do any thing of this kind without a Divine approbation, he desired of Ahab to enquire at the word of the Lord concerning the event of this expedition. To this purpose Ahab summoned together four hundred priests of the goddess Astarte, ‡ who unanimously agreed that the expedition would prove successful; but, as Jehoshaphat's purpose was not to enquire of these but of some true prophet of the Lord, with much difficulty he obtained of Ahab to have Micaiah produced, who, charging †²

likewise, that his estate might be confiscated, and Ahab by that means get possession of his vineyard. *Patrick's Commentary.*

† Princes never want instruments to execute their pleasure: and yet it is strange, that among all these judges and great men there should be none that abhorred such a villany. It must be considered, however, that for a long while they had cast off all fear and sense of God, and prostituted their consciences to please their king; nor durst they disobey Jezebel's commands, who had the full power and government of the king, (as they well knew) and could easily have taken away their lives, had they refused to condemn Naboth. *Pool's Annotations.*

* [It was not in Samaria, nor on the way as he returned to it, that Ahab was met by Elijah, but in the very vineyard of Naboth, of which he had just taken possession. The words of God to the prophet are,—“Arise, go down to meet Ahab king of Israel, which is in Samaria,” i. e. as Bishop Patrick observes, “who reigns in Samaria; behold, he is in the vineyard of Naboth, whether he is gone down to possess it. The words *he is*, in the latter clause of the verse, are not in the original; and the whole might be thus rendered,—“Arise, go down to meet Ahab king of Israel (who reigneth in Samaria) lo! in the garden of Naboth, whither he is gone down to possess it!”]

|| There is a great dispute among the learned, as

to the accomplishment of this prophecy. At first, it was no doubt intended to be literally fulfilled, but upon Ahab's repentance, (as we find below) the punishment was transferred from him to his son Jehoram, in whom it was actually accomplished; for his “dead body was cast into the portion of the field of Naboth the Jezreelite for the dogs to devour it,” 2 Kings ix. 25. Since Ahab's blood therefore was licked by dogs, not at Jezreel, but at Samaria, it seems necessary, that we should understand the Hebrew word which our translation renders in the place, where, not as denoting the place, but the manner in which the thing was done; and so the sense of the passage will be,—“that as dogs licked, or in like manner as dogs licked Naboth's blood, even so shall they lick thine; observe what I say, even thine.” *Pool's Annotations.*

‡ [It is not said that they were prophets or priests of the goddess Astarte. That they were false prophets is certain, though one of them at least—Zedekiah the son of *Chenanaah*—pretended, in the presence of Jehoshaphat, that he spoke by the Spirit of *Jehovah*. Indeed they all agreed in saying (ver. 12.) that *Jehovah* would deliver Ramoth-Gilead into the hands of Ahab.]

†² Micaiah's answer to Ahab, enquiring of him the success of his intended expedition, is, “Go, and prosper; for the Lord shall deliver the city into the

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Ahab's prophets with falsehood, foretold that the enterprise would prove fatal to all Israel, and to Ahab in particular, and therefore he advised both the kings to desist.

Ahab, however, instead of listening to Micaiah, ordered him into custody until he should return in peace; and, taking Jehoshaphat with him, marched with all his forces to the siege: but, when he came within sight of the enemy's army, his courage began to cool, and, thinking to evade the force of Micaiah's prophecy by a stratagem of his own, he put himself in the garb of a common officer, and advised Jehoshaphat to fight in his royal robes. The king of Syria had given particular command to his generals † to single out Ahab, and, if possible, to kill him as the chief author of the war. At first they mistook Jehoshaphat for the king of Israel, and therefore fell upon him with great impetuosity; but perceiving at length that he was not the person they wanted, they desisted from their pursuit of him, and, in quest of Ahab, bended their course another way.

Ahab, however, did not gain much by his politic project, as he thought it; for he was mortally wounded by a random arrow: and though he was held up in his chariot for some time, with his face towards the enemy, to encourage his soldiers, yet about sun-set he died, and a retreat was sounded. His dead body was carried to Samaria, and there buried, and his son Ahaziah succeeded him in the kingdom: but as the chariot wherein he was carried was all stained with the flux of blood from his wound, while it was washed in a pool near the city, the dogs came and licked it, that the prophecy of Elijah might not altogether go unfulfilled.

As for Jehoshaphat, though he escaped from the battle, and returned in peace to Jerusalem, yet God sent the prophet Jehu to reprove him for his having assisted Ahab, who was * God's avowed enemy: but this fault he endeavoured to repair by the good orders which he established in his dominions, both as to civil and religious affairs; by appointing honest and able judges, *² and giving them proper charges; by regulating

hand of the king," 1 Kings xxii. 15. which does not at all contradict the other prophets, had it been spoken in earnest; but we have good reason to believe, that the words were spoken ironically, and in mockery to the promises which the other prophets made Ahab. Accordingly, we may observe by Ahab's reply, that he suspected Micaiah's sincerity, and, either by his gesture, or manner of speaking, gathered, that his meaning was to traduce these false prophets for their answers. So that Micaiah's answer is in effect, as if he had said,—“ Since thou dost not seek to know the truth, but only to please thyself, go to the battle as all thy prophets advise thee, expect the success which they promise thee, and try the truth of their predictions by thy dear-bought experience.” *Pool's* Annotations.

† This Benhadad might order, either in policy, as supposing this to be the best and readiest way to put an end to the war; or with a design to take him prisoner, that thereby he might wipe out the stain of his own captivity, and recover the honour and advantages which he then lost. *Pool's* Annotations.

* Even common reason taught the heathens not to make any friendship with such as were enemies to the gods; and therefore Callimachus, in his hymn to Ceres, tells her,

Δάμνητε μὴ τήνος ἐμὴν φίλος, ὅς τοι ἀπεχθὺς
ἔστω, μὴδ' ὁμότοιχος, ἐμοὶ κακογυῖτονες ἐχθροί.

Whereupon the illustrious Spanheim has observed many similar sayings among the heathens, and how the ancient Greeks abhorred to lodge in the same house, or to eat at the same table, with a murderer, or any grievous criminal, for the same reason perhaps that Horace has expressed upon the like occasion.

— vetabo, qui Cereris sacrum

Vulgarit Arcanæ, sub iisdem

Sit trabibus, fragilemve mecum

Solvat phaselum. Sæpe Diespiter

Neglectus incesto addidit integrum:

Raro antecedentem scelestum

Deseruit pede pœna Claudio.

Lib. iii. Ode 2.

*² The charge, or solemn admonition, which Jehoshaphat gave the judges, whom he appointed in each city, runs in these words,—“ Take heed what ye do, for ye judge not for man, but for the Lord, who is with you in the judgment; wherefore now, let the fear of the Lord be upon you: Take heed and do it; for there is no iniquity with the Lord our God, no respect of persons, nor taking of gifts,” 2 Chron. xix. 6, 7. It is a remarkable saying of Cicero, that judges, being sworn to do justice, should remember, when they come to pass sentence, “ Deum habere testem; id est, ut ego arbitrator, mentem suam, quâ nihil homini dedit ipse Deus divinius.” *De Offic.* lib. iii. c. 13. Where he has left us this excellent instruction likewise, that “ a man must lay aside the person of a friend when he puts on the person of a

the discipline and order of the priests and Levites, and by enjoining them to perform punctually their respective duties in the service of God. Nor was it long before he experimentally found the favour of God extended to him, in a most miraculous manner, for this his reformation. For when the Moabites and Ammonites, with their auxiliaries, made a formidable invasion upon his kingdom, and he thereupon had appointed a public fast, and applied himself to God for help * by humiliation and prayer, he had a most gracious answer vouchsafed him, viz. That on the next day he should obtain a complete victory, without once striking a stroke; which accordingly came to pass. For when Jehoshaphat drew up his army near the place where the enemy lay, he found nothing there but dead bodies; God having been pleased, before his approach, so to confound their understanding, that being a mixt multitude of diverse nations, they † some

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judge." In like manner, there are several passages in Hesiod, admonishing those who have the administration of justice, to retain in their minds the consideration of their gods inspection: But one of these will answer to our purpose,—

Ὁ βασιλεῖς, ὑμεῖς δὲ καταφραζέσθε καὶ αὐτοὶ
τὴν δὲ δίκην· ἐγγὺς γὰρ ἐν ἀνθρώποισιν ἔοντες
Ἀθάνατοι λεύσσουν·, ὅσοι σκολιῇσι δίκῃσι
Ἀλλήλους τρέφουσιν, Θεῶν ὅπιν οὐκ ἀλέγοντες.
Τρεῖς γὰρ μύριοι εἰσιν ἐπὶ χθονὶ πουλοβοτείρη
Ἀθάνατοι Ζηνός, Φύλακες θνητῶν ἀνθρώπων,
"Οἱ ῥα φυλάσσουνι τε δίκας, καὶ σκέτλια ἔργα,
Ἡέρα ἱσόμενοι, πάτη φοιτῶντες ἐπ' αἶαν &c.

De Oper. et Diebus, lin. 246.

* This prayer of Jehoshaphat's is deservedly accounted one of the most excellent that we meet with in Sacred History. He begins it with an acknowledgment of God's supreme and irresistible power, which extends itself every where over all creatures in heaven and earth, which are every one subject to his authority:—"O Lord God of our fathers, art thou not God in heaven? And rulest not thou over all the kingdoms of the heathen? And in thine hand is there not power and might, so that none is able to withstand thee?" Then he remembers the peculiar relation which the people of Israel have to him; the promise he made to Abraham as a reward of his fidelity; and the deed of gift which he conveyed to him and his posterity of this country for ever: "Art thou not our God, who didst drive out the inhabitants of the land before thy people Israel, and gavest it to the seed of Abraham, thy friend, for ever?" Then he reminds him of the long possession they had had of the country, and of the temple which Solomon had built for his worship, to whom, at the consecration, (and therefore he refers to Solomon's words at the consecration, 1 Kings viii.) he promised a gracious regard to all the prayers that should be offered there. "And they dwelt therein, and have built thee a sanctuary therein for thy name," saying, "If, when evil cometh upon us, as the sword, judgment, or pestilence, or famine, we stand before this house, and in thy presence, (for thy name is in this house) and cry unto thee in our affliction, then thou wilt hear and help." In the next place, he represents the foul ingratitude of their enemies in invading a country, to which they had no manner of title, even though the

Israelites did them not the least harm when they came to take possession of it, but took the pains to march a long way about to get to it, rather than give any molestation; and, in aggravation of their wickedness in this respect, he suggests, that by this invasion they made an attempt, not only upon the rights of the Israelites, but of God himself, who was the great Lord and Proprietor, from whom they held the land: "And now behold the children of Ammon, and Moab, and Mount Seir, whom thou wouldest not let Israel invade when they came out of the land of Egypt, but they turned from them, and destroyed them not; behold, I say, how they reward us, to come to cast us out of thy possession, which thou gavest us to inherit." Then he appeals to the justice of God, the righteous judge, who helps those that suffer wrong, especially when they have no other helper; for this is the last argument he makes use of to conciliate the Divine assistance, even the weak condition wherein he and his people were, which made them the objects of the Divine pity, especially since they placed their hope and confidence in him alone. "O Lord, our God, wilt thou not judge them? For we have no might against this great company that cometh against us, neither know we what to do, but our eyes are upon thee." 2 Chron. xx. 12, &c. with *Patrick's Commentary* on the words.

† The words in the text are,—“The Lord sent ambushments against the children of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, which were come against Judah, and they were smitten,” 2 Chron. xx. 22. And there are two ways wherein this slaughter may be supposed to have happened: Either, 1st, By the ministry of God's angels, who might appear in the shape of men, and putting on the appearance of Moabites or Ammonites, might smite some other part of the army privately, and they, supposing this to be done by their neighbours, might turn about and fall upon them like enemies, and so break forth into mutual slaughters: Or, 2d, By some jealousies and animosities among themselves, which, by degrees, brake forth, first into secret ambushments, which one party laid for another, and then into open hostilities and outrages to their total destruction. So easy a thing it is for God to defeat his enemies, who can, when he pleases, infatuate their designs; or arm their own passions and mistakes against them! *Pool's Annotations* on 2 Chron. xx. 22.

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way or other by mistake fell a slaying and destroying one another; so that Jehoshaphat and his people had nothing else to do but to carry off the arms and spoils of the dead, wherein they employed themselves for three whole days; and on the fourth, meeting in a valley, (which, from this event, was called afterwards the Valley of Blessing), they gave solemn thanks to God for this deliverance; and not long after, Jehoshaphat, with his victorious troops entering Jerusalem in triumph, was received with the joyful acclamations of his people, and struck such terror into all neighbouring nations, that for the remainder of his reign he met with no molestation.

One loss however he had towards the conclusion of his reign † in joining with Ahaziah, king of Israel, to equip out a fleet in the port of Ezion-Geber, in order to go to Tarshish; for the whole fleet was dashed in pieces upon a ridge of rocks that lay in the mouth of the harbour, before they ever got to sea. But as Jehoshaphat was afterwards convinced that this was a judgment of God upon him for entering into partnership with an impious prince (as Ahaziah certainly was), the next fleet he set out was from his other port of Elah, wherein he suffered Ahaziah to have no concern, and therefore came off with better success. The truth is, Jehoshaphat was a religious and good prince, a zealous and great reformer, and yet the people still retained a kindness for the high places. He lived sixty, and reigned twenty-five years; was buried in the city of David, and succeeded by his son Jehoram.

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Jehoshaphat had six other sons; but, to give no umbrage for suspicion, he had in his lifetime removed them from all public business, made them governors of fenced cities, and given them separate fortunes of their own. But notwithstanding all this precaution, as soon as Jehoram was settled on the throne, he murdered all his brothers, and several chief men in Israel, who (as he suspected) either adhered to their party, or were likely to revenge their deaths.

During these cruel proceedings in the very beginning of his reign, he had a †² letter sent him from Elijah, wherein he upbraided him with the murder of his brothers, and his departure from the religion of his ancestors; and wherein †⁵ he threatened him

† This certainly was a great weakness in him to make friendship with the son, when he had been so sharply reproved for joining with his father Ahab, especially since the son was as great an idolater as the father; but into this he was betrayed by the affinity that was between them; and though he did not join with him in war, but only in trade, yet God was nevertheless displeased with him; which shews how dangerous a thing it is to have too near a familiarity of commerce with idolaters, or any other very wicked men. *Patrick's Commentary.*

†² Now since it is plain, from 2 Kings ii. 11, &c. that Elijah was taken up into heaven in the time of Jehoshaphat, the question is, How could Elijah send his son a letter? For resolution to this, Josephus and others imagine that this writing was indited in heaven, where Elijah now is, and sent to Jehoram by the ministry of angels. But there is no reason to suppose that so singular a miracle was wrought in favour of an idolatrous prince, who had Moses and the prophets, which (in our Saviour's opinion) were sufficient to instruct him in all points necessary to salvation, and needed not any additional writing to be sent him from the other world. Others therefore are of opinion, that this letter was written before Elijah's ascension into heaven; that foreseeing, by the spirit of prophecy, the great wickedness Jehoram would fall into, he dictated the contents hereof to one of

the prophets, charging him to put them down in writing, to send them in a letter to Jehoram when he grew as impious as is here related, and to let him know withal, that Elijah commanded this writing to be delivered to him, upon presumption that it would affect him the more, as it came from a person that was translated into heaven. But this notion has no better foundation than the other: For prophets were sent to those who lived in their own age, to declare unto them the will of God, not to write letters, fit to be delivered only when they had departed out of this life. God never left himself without a witness; and at this time more especially there were prophets in abundance: And therefore others have supposed, that there has been a mistake in the transcriber, and the name of Elijah put for that of Elisha; or that the Elijah, by whom this letter was sent, was not the prophet who was taken up into heaven, but another of that name, who lived in the subsequent age, and was contemporary with Jehoram. Which of these conjectures (for conjectures they are all) seems most feasible, we are at liberty to choose, since any of them is sufficient to solve the above-mentioned difficulty. *Le Clerc's and Patrick's Commentaries.*

†³ There was no calamity that could be thought of (as several have observed) which did not befall this wicked prince. His kingdom was destroyed and depopulated by the fiercest nations; his treasures ran-

with a sore disease in his bowels, and his wives, his children, and people, with judgments of several kinds which God would send upon them. Nor was it long before these threats began to operate. The Edomites, who had all along been subject to the house of David, rebelled; and having expelled his deputy, made themselves a king of their own, and were never again subject to the Jewish yoke. Libnah, a city in his own dominions, shook off its allegiance, and refused to acknowledge him any longer for its sovereign. The Philistines and Arabians made inroads upon his territories, ravaged the country, plundered his palace, and carried away his very wives and children, so that they left none, except Jehoahaz the youngest; and (to complete his misery) after God had afflicted him with a cruel dysentery, which for two years grievously tormented him, and brought him at last to his grave, he died, without being so much as lamented by his subjects; and, after a life of forty, and a reign of eight years, being buried indeed in the city of David (but not in any of the royal sepulchres), was succeeded by his son Jehoahaz. But to return to the history of king Ahaziah.

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Ahaziah, as we said, succeeded his father Ahab in the kingdom of Israel, in the seventeenth year of Jehoshaphat's reign, and was not a whit behind him in all manner of wickedness. But as his reign was but short (in the whole not above the space of two years), so was it inglorious, and full of trouble. For in the first year of his reign, the Moabites, who had always been obedient to the kings of Israel from the first separation of the two kingdoms, took now an opportunity to revolt, nor had he power to reduce them to their subjection: For in the second year of his reign he received such a hurt by a fall from † the terrace of his house, as reduced him to a very bad state of health. In this condition, he sent to * Baalzebub, the god of Ekron, to know if he should reco-

sacked; his wives carried into captivity; his children slain; himself afflicted with a sore disease for two years; and when he was dead, denied the honour of a royal sepulchre, such as his father had. All which calamities were threatened in this writing sent him in the name of Elijah, that he might not think that they came by chance, but by the special direction of Almighty God as a punishment for his impiety. *Patrick's Comment. on 2 Chron. xxi. 14.*

† In the Eastern countries the roofs of the houses were flat and surrounded with a battlement to prevent falling from them, because it was a customary thing for people to walk upon them in order to take the air. Now in this battlement we may suppose that there were some wooden lattices for people to look through, of equal height with the parapet-wall, and that Ahaziah, negligently leaning on it, (as it was rotten and infirm) it broke down and let him fall into the court or garden belonging to his house. Or there is another way whereby he might fall. In these flat roofs there was generally an opening, which served instead of a sky-light to the house below; and this opening might be done over with lattice-work, which the king, as he was carelessly walking, might chance to step upon and slip through. Nor is there any absurdity in supposing such lattice-work in a king's palace, when the world was not arrived to that height of art and curiosity that we find it in now. *Pool's Annotations, and Calmet's Dissert. sur les Edifices des anciens Hebreux.*

* The word signifies *the god of flies*; but how this idol came to obtain that name, it is not so easy a matter to discover. Several are of opinion that this god was called Baal-semin, the Lord of heaven, but that

the Jews, by way of contempt, gave it the name of Baal-zebub, or the lord of a fly, a god that was nothing worth, or (as others say) whose temple was filled with flies; whereas the temple of Jerusalem (notwithstanding all the sacrifices that were there daily offered) never once had a fly in it, as their doctors relate. The Sacred Writings indeed, when they speak of the gods of the heathens, very frequently call them in general, idols, vanity, abominations, &c. but they never change their proper names into such as are of an opprobrious import; neither can we think it likely that the king of Israel would have called the god of Ekron, for whom he had so high veneration, as to consult him in his sickness, by any appellation of contempt. Whoever considers what troublesome and destructive creatures (especially in some hot countries) flies are known to be; in what vast swarms they sometimes settle, and not only devour all the fruits of the earth, but in many places occasion a noisome pestilence; may reasonably suppose, that the heathens had a proper deity, to whom they made their addresses, either for the prevention, or removal of this sore plague. [In particular, the fly, called *Zebub*, and in modern Arabic, *Zimb*, is an insect so very destructive as to render it far from surprising that the ancient Polytheists, who had gods presiding over every department of nature, should worship, as a very powerful deity, *Baalzebub*, or the *Lord of flies*. The *Zebub* or *Zimb* is never seen, says Mr Bruce, but where the earth is fat and loamy; and though very little larger than a bee, "whenever it makes its appearance in swarms (as it always does), and even as soon as its buzzing is heard, all the cattle forsake their food, and run wildly about, till they die, worn out with fatigue,

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ver †; but, by God's appointment, the prophet Elijah was sent to meet his messengers, and †² to turn them back with this answer, "That the king should certainly die." The messengers, coming back much sooner than was expected, acquainted the king with the reason of it; and he, * by their description, understanding that it was Elijah who sent him this message, immediately dispatched a captain with fifty soldiers to apprehend him; but upon their approach, and insolently commanding him to appear before the king, the prophet commanded fire to come down from heaven and destroy them. The like he did to another captain and his company; but when the third came in a more submissive manner, and begged his life and the lives of his soldiers, †³ Elijah went with

fright, and hunger." Even the elephant flies before it, or rolls himself in the mire to protect his skin from its attack. "The very sound of the *Zimb*, before it is seen, occasions, says the same author, more trepidation both in the human and brute creation, than would whole herds of these monstrous animals collected together, though their number was in a tenfold proportion greater than it really is;" and the only remedy that remains for the shepherd on the appearance of this destructive insect, is to hasten with his cattle as quickly as he can to the nearest sandy desert, whether the *Zimb* never pursues them. If we may believe *Sandys*, these flies abound in the country that was anciently called Ekron. And accordingly we are told by Pliny (lib. xxix. c. 6.), that when there was a plague in Africa, occasioned by vast quantities of flies, after that the people had sacrificed to the god Achore, (he should have said, the god of Ekron, for there is a plain affinity between their names) the flies all died, and the distemper was extinguished. Now it was a known maxim of the heathen theology, that as all plagues were inflicted by some evil dæmon or other, so all evil dæmons were under the restraint of some superior one, who is their prince and ruler. As therefore Pluto was known to be the god of hell, and to have all the mischievous band of spirits under his control, to him the heathens used to pray, and offer sacrifices, that he might not suffer any of his inferior agents to inflict this heavy judgment upon them. They worshipped him, I say, not to engage him to do them any good, but to prevail with him to do them no harm: and accordingly we may observe, that every thing in their service was dark and gloomy. Their offerings were in the night.

Tum regi Stygio nocturnas inchoat aras.

Virg. Æn. vi.

Their victims were black,

———Huc casta Sybilla

Nigrantum multo pecudum te sanguine ducet.

Ibid. Æn. vi.

And the blood let out into a deep ditch.

———Cultros in guttera velleris atri

Conjicit, et patulas perfundit sanguine fossas.

Ovid. Met. lib. vii.

Such good reason have we to think, that the Baalzebub, in Scripture called the "prince of the devils," was the very same with the Pluto whom the Heathens made the god of hell, and worshipped in this manner. *Patrick's* and *Le Clerc's* Commentaries, *Jurieu Hist. des Dogmes et Cultes. Part. iv. c. 3, &c. Bruce's Travels, and Harmer's Observations.*

† Ekron was a city and government of the Philistines, which fell by lot to the tribe of Judah, in the first division made by Joshua, Josh. xv. 45. but was afterwards given up to the tribe of Dan, Josh. xix. 43. though it does not appear from history that the Jews ever had a peaceable possession of it. It was situated near the Mediterranean Sea, between Ashdod and Jamnia, in a moist and hot soil, and was therefore very much infested with flies. *Calmet's Dictionary, and Patrick's Commentary.*

†³ It may seem somewhat strange, that Ahaziah's messengers should stop their journey to Ekron at Elijah's command; but he was a man of such a venerable presence, and spake to them with such authority in the name of the Lord, that they were overawed thereby to obey him rather than the king. *Patrick's Commentary.*

* The description which the messengers give of Eijah is,—“That he was an hairy man, and girt with a girdle of leather about his loins,” 2 Kings i. 8. where his being an hairy man, may either denote his wearing long the hair of his head and beard, as the ancient Greek philosophers were wont to do, and as Lucan describes Cato.

Intensos rigidam in frontem descendere canos

Passus erat, mœstamque genis increscere barbam: Or it may denote his habit, which was made of skins, rough, and with their hair on; as the ancient heroes were clothed in the skins of lions, tigers, and bears; as the evangelist represents the baptist in a "raiment of camel's hair," Matth. iii. 4. as the apostle describes the prophets, "wandering about in sheep-skins and goat-skins," Heb. xi. 37. and as Statius dresses up old Tiresias,

———longævi vatis opacos

Tiresiæ vultus, vocemque et vellera nota

Induitur.———

Theb. lib. ii.

†³ This is a great instance of the prophet's faith and obedience to God, in whom he trusted, that he would deliver him from the wrath of the king and the malice of Jezebel. He had ordered, not long before, all the prophets of Baal to be slain; had sent a very unwelcome message to the king; and now made a very terrible execution upon two of his captains and their companies; so that he had all the reason in the world to apprehend the utmost expressions of the king's displeasure: And yet, when God commands him, he makes no manner of hesitation, but goes boldly to him, and confirms with his own mouth the ungrateful truth which he had declared to his messengers. *Patrick's Commentary.*

him to the king, and told him from his own mouth what he had before told the messengers; which accordingly came to pass, for he died a short time after, and having no son of his own, was, || in the second year of Jehoram, son of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, succeeded by his brother Jehoram.

From 1 Kings viii. to the end of 2 Chron.

About the beginning of the † reign of Jehoram, king of Judah, Elijah the prophet was translated into heaven. God, very likely, had given him some intimation of the time when this miraculous event should happen; and therefore, before his departure, he visited the sons of the prophets that were at Bethel and Jericho, and took his leave of them with such solemnity, that they began to suspect that this was the last visit he intended to make them; and accordingly †² apprised Elisha of it, who thereupon determined not to leave his master as long as he continued upon earth.

With this resolution he set forward with Elijah, who was now shaping his course towards his native country of Gilead, from whence he was to be translated; and as they were to pass over the Jordan, Elijah †³ with his mantle struck the waters, which instantly divided into two parts, so that they went over on dry ground.

When they had passed the river in the sight of fifty of the †⁴ sons of the prophets,

|| How could Jehoram, the brother of Ahaziah, begin his reign in Israel in the second year of Jehoram, the son of Jehoshaphat, when we read soon after, that he began to reign over Israel in the eighteenth of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, 2 Kings iii. 1.; and in another place, that Jehoram, the son of Jehoshaphat, began to reign over Judah in the fifth year of Jehoram king of Israel? 2 Kings viii. 16. Now, it is but supposing that Jehoshaphat declared his son Jehoram king, while himself was alive, and reigned in conjunction with him for the space of seven years, and all the difficulty is removed: For then Jehoram the son of Ahab might begin his reign in the second year of Jehoram son of Jehoshaphat, viz. in the second year that he reigned with his father, who was then alive; and Jehoram son of Jehoshaphat may be said to have begun his reign in the fifth of Jehoram the son of Ahab, meaning the time when, after his father's death, he began to reign alone. That the kings of Judah and Israel (as well as other oriental princes) were accustomed to appoint their successors, and, even during their lifetime to give them some share in the administration, is plain from several instances: And that Jehoshaphat found it expedient to settle his son in the kingdom with himself, seems to be intimated in 2 Chron. xxi. 3. where it is said, that "he gave the kingdom to Jehoram, because he was his first-born, and gave gifts to the rest of his sons," who being many, might perhaps be forming parties, and entering into cabals about the succession to the kingdom; and therefore, to put an end to all such contests, Jehoshaphat declared Jehoram king while himself was on the throne, because he was his first-born. *Calmet's* and *Patrick's* Commentaries.

† To prevent confusion, the reader is desired to take notice, that in the course of this history there is mention made of two Jehorams who reigned much about the same time; one, the second son of Ahab, who succeeded his brother Ahaziah, and was king of Israel; and the other, who was son and heir of Jehoshaphat, and reigned in Judah; both very wicked princes, and therefore the greater care should be taken that their actions be not blended together.

†² The expression in the text is—"Knowest thou that the Lord will take away thy master from thy head to-day?" 2 Kings ii. 3. Where the sons of the prophets allude to their manner of sitting in their school. For the scholars used to sit below their masters feet, and the masters above over their heads, when they taught them: And therefore the sense of the words is, that God would deprive Elisha of his master Elijah's instructions, viz. by a sudden death. For it does not appear that they had any notion of his translation; so far from this, that they desired leave to send out some to seek for him, "if peradventure the Spirit of the Lord had taken him up and cast him upon some mountain, or into some valley," 2 Kings ii. 16. *Patrick's* Commentary.

†³ In these two books of Kings, there is mention made five times of this mantle; and in every place it is called *Adareth*, which denotes a royal as well as a prophetic robe. The Septuagint always translate it by the word *μῆλον*, which properly signifies the prophetic mantle, made of lamb-skins, being a kind of upper garment thrown over the shoulders, and, as some think, reaching down to the heels; though others take it for no more than a leathern jacket to keep out rain.

Ad subitas nusquam scortea desit aquas.

Mart. lib. 14.

†⁴ By "the sons of the prophets," we are to understand "the scholars of the prophets," such as they educated and trained up in religion and virtue, upon whom God by degrees bestowed the spirit of prophecy, and whom the superior prophets employed in the same capacity, as the apostles did the evangelists, viz. to publish their prophecies and instructions to the people, in the places where they themselves could not go. Nor is it any small testimony of God's love to an apostate people, that in these corrupt times, and in that very place where the golden calves were worshipped, he still continued the schools of the prophets, in order to recover them from idolatry. Nay, what is very remarkable, there were prophets of greater excellency for their miracles in Israel than were in Judah, because they needed them more, both to turn

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and as they drew near to the place of Elijah's ascension, Elisha requested of him, that the same gift of prophecy which God had been pleased to bestow on him, might be † communicated to him in a larger measure than to the other prophets; which the other did not positively promise, but told him, however, that if he happened to see him when he came to be translated, this would be a good sign, that God would not refuse him his request: And while they were thus going on, and talking, there appeared, as it were, a bright chariot, and horses, running towards them on the ground, and, coming between them, parted them. * For Elijah mounted the chariot, and in a great gust of wind, directed by angels, was transported into heaven; while Elisha, who was left behind, †² cried to him, as he saw him mount, and expressed his sorrow when he was gone: But taking up the mantle which had dropt from him in his ascent, with it he divided the waters, as Elijah had done, and repassed the Jordan.

Hereby the prophets of Jericho, and the places adjacent, were convinced that the spirit of Elijah rested upon Elisha. And accordingly, when they met him, they recognised him for his successor, and paid him the same respect. Believing, however, that the Spirit of God might possibly have *² transported Elijah into some distant or desert

their hard hearts from the worship of idols, and to preserve the pious persons that remained among them from deserting their religion. *Patrick's Commentary.*

† The words in the text are,—“Let, I pray thee, a double portion of thy spirit be upon me;” where some learned men are of opinion, that this request in Elisha would be arrogant, if the words were to be taken in their most obvious sense; and therefore they refer them to Elisha's school-fellows, whom he desires to surpass in all prophetic gifts, as much as the first-born did excel the other children in his portion of the inheritance. But seeing Elijah had no other successor upon whom he was to bestow any prophetic gifts but Elisha, we cannot see why Elisha may not be said to have a double portion of the prophetic spirit, since it is evident he did many more miracles than Elijah did, and, even after his death, exerted a Divine power in raising the dead man, 2 Kings xiii. 21. Had he desired this double portion indeed out of a principle of vain glory, there might then be something said against his request; but since he did it with a pure intent to become thereby more serviceable in his generation, we cannot perceive why he was to blame in requesting what our blessed Saviour granted to his apostles, viz. the power of working greater miracles than he himself did. *Le Clerc's* and *Calmet's* Commentaries.

* What this chariot was, and to what place it conveyed Elijah, we shall have occasion to observe in the following Dissertation; at present we shall only take notice of some things relating to this prophet's character. The author of *Ecclesiasticus* (chap. xlviii. 1, &c.) has dedicated^m this encomium to his memory, —“Then stood up Elias the prophet as fire, and his word burnt like a lamp. He brought a sore famine among them, and by his zeal he diminished their number. By the word of the Lord he shut up the heaven, and also three times brought down fire. O Elias, how wast thou honoured by the wondrous deeds? And who may glory like unto thee? Who didst raise a dead man from death, and his soul from the place of the dead, by the word of the Most High; who

broughtest kings to destruction, and honourable men to their bed:—Who wast taken up in a whirlind of fire, and in a chariot of fiery horses; who wast ordained for reproofs in their times, to pacify the wrath of the Lord's judgment before it brake forth into fury, to turn the heart of the father to the son, and to restore the tribes of Jacob.” In which last sentence our author alludes to that passage in Malachi, chap. iv. 5, 6. “Behold I will send you Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord; and he shall turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.”

†² The words of Elisha upon this occasion are, “My father, my father, (so they called their masters and instructors) the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof.” The expression alludes to the form of the chariot and horses that he had just then beheld, and seems to imply, “That Elijah, by his example, and counsel, and prayers, and power with God, did more for the defence and preservation of Israel, than all their chariots and horses, and other warlike provisions;” unless we may suppose, that this was an abrupt speech which Elisha, in the consternation he was in, left unfinished, and so the Sacred History has recorded it. *Pool's* Annotations and *Le Clerc's* Commentaries.

*² The Spirit of the Lord (whereby we may understand either the power of God, or some one of his angels), frequently used to carry the prophets through the air, and with vast celerity remove them to distant places; and therefore Obadiah speaks of it as a common thing: “And it shall come to pass, as soon as I am gone from thee, that the Spirit of the Lord will carry thee where I know not, so that when the king cannot find thee he will slay me,” 1 Kings xviii. 12. And accordingly, in the New Testament, we are told of Philip, that “when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught him away, that the eunuch saw him no more, and Philip was found at Azotus,” Acts viii. 39, 40. *Le Clerc's* Commentary.

place, they desired leave to send out fifty men in search of him. Elisha assured them that it would be needless: However, to give them all the conviction they desired, he suffered them to do what they pleased; so that the men went, and returned again after three days search to no purpose.

From 1 Kings viii. to the end of 2 Chron.

From this place Elisha proceeded to Jericho, where, at the request of the inhabitants, he cured the † brackishness of their water, and the barrenness of their soil. Thence he continued his course to Bethel, where, upon the childrens mocking and ridiculing him, †² two she bears, rushing out of the neighbouring forest, fell upon them, and devoured two and forty of them. From Bethel he went to Mount Carmel, where probably there was another school of the prophets; and from thence he proceeded to Samaria, where he had soon opportunities enough of exerting his prophetic office.

It was in the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, that this Jehoram, king of Israel, began to reign; and though he did not make any great reformation in his kingdom, yet he was not altogether as wicked as his father and brother; for †⁵ he removed the idols of Baal (very likely to procure Jehoshaphat's friendship), though the golden calves (which were the state-engine to keep up the division between Israel and Judah) he could not prevail with himself to depose. In this state, however, he †⁴ had Jehoshaphat for an ally when he engaged in a war (which was in the beginning of his reign) with Mesha, king of Moab, for refusing to pay the tribute †⁵ of an hundred

† The manner in which the prophet Elisha sweetened the fountain, and made the soil fruitful, was by casting salt into the water, to make the miracle more conspicuous; for salt is a thing, that of all others makes water less potable, and the ground more barren. Josephus, however, willing to improve upon this history, adds (as his usual manner is) several circumstances of his own. For he tells us,—“That this fountain did not only corrupt the fruits of the earth (whether grain or plants), but likewise caused abortions in women, and tainted, with a blasted infection, whatever it touched, that was capable of such impression; that Elisha, having been treated with great hospitality and respect by the people of Jericho, be thought himself of such an acknowledgment, as they themselves, their country, and their posterity, to the end of the world, might be the better for; that hereupon he went out to the fountain, and causing a pitcher of salt to be let down to the bottom of it, he advanced his right hand towards heaven, and presenting his oblations at the side of it, besought God in his goodness to correct the water, and to sweeten the veins through which it passed, to soften the air, and make it more temperate and fructifying, to bestow children, as well as fruits upon the inhabitants in abundance, and never to withdraw these blessings so long as they continued in their duty; and that, upon offering up this prayer with all due ceremony, and according to form, the ill quality of the fountain was changed, and (instead of sterility) became now an efficacious means of plenty and increase.” The author, we may observe, (to gratify pagans) represents Elisha in the form of a magician, who by invocations, oblations, and other secret and mysterious operations, changed the bad quality of the waters, and thereby made the valley of Jericho fruitful; whereas this was done in a manner altogether supernatural and miraculous. Nay, to this very day there is a fountain to

words the west of Jericho, which rises about three quarters of a league above the town, in the way to Jerusalem, which, yielding a great deal of water, (and that very good in its kind) runs along, and fructifies the plain. *The wars of the Jews*, lib. v. c. 4.

†² They had probably been robbed of their whelps, which made them more fierce and outrageous. *Patrick's Commentary*.

†³ It is a little strange, that his mother Jezebel, who brought this worship with her from the Sidonians, should suffer him to remove the images of her favourite god; but she perhaps might be a little daunted with the many disasters that had befallen her family, and was content with the privilege of having her idolatrous worship in private: nor is it unlikely, that Jehoshaphat might refuse to assist him in his wars against the king of Moab, unless he would consent to renounce his idolatry. *Patrick's Commentary*.

†⁴ The answer which he gives Jehoram, is the very same that he returned to his father Ahab in his war against the Syrians; “I am, as thou art; my people, as thy people; and my horses, as thy horses,” 1 Kings xxii. 4. and 2 Kings iii. 7. And considering the ill success he had, one would wonder why he should be so forward to join with his son; but as Jehoram had reformed some things, he might have a better opinion of him, and by shewing him kindness, hope perhaps to prevail with him to proceed farther; and as the Moabites had of late invaded his country, 2 Chron. xx. 1. he might embrace this opportunity to chastise them for it. But without these considerations, the war was right and justifiable; and fit it was that rebels and revolvers should be chastised, lest the example should pass into his own dominions, and encourage the Edomites to revolt from him, as we find they afterwards did from his son. *Patrick's Commentary*, and *Pool's Annotations*.

†⁵ This was a prodigious number indeed; but then

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thousand lambs, and an hundred thousand rams with the wool, which (until the reign of his brother Abaziah) had been all along, from the time of David, paid to the crown of Israel; and as the king of Edom was then no more than deputy to Jehoshaphat, he engaged him likewise in the quarrel. These three kings, in order to surprise the enemy, and invade him on the weakest side, took a compass of seven days march in the wilderness of Edom, and had like to have been all lost for want of water, had not the prophet Elisha, who was then in the camp, (a) put them on a method how to procure some; and not only so, but at the same time promised them a complete victory over the Moabites. The next morning the confederate army had water enough; and the Moabites, who were now marching to oppose them, perceiving water where they knew there used to be none, and by the reflection of the sun that it looked like blood, supposed that the three kings had quarrelled, and their armies engaged and slain one another; so that they concluded they had nothing to do but to fall upon the spoil. But when they came to the camp, the Israelites gave them a reception that they little expected; for they not only killed great numbers of them upon the spot, but pursued them into their country, destroyed their fortified places, choked up their springs, cut down their timber, and made ravage and devastation wherever they came; insomuch that the king was forced to betake himself to his capital city Kirhareth, where the confederate army besieged him, and soon reduced him to such extremity, that after he had made a successful sally with seven hundred men in hopes of forcing the king of Edom's quarters, and found himself repulsed, he took his eldest son, † and in mere desperation sacrificed him upon the wall of the city, in the sight of the Israelitish army, who, being struck with horror at so barbarous an action, raised the siege, and retired to their own country.

Upon raising this siege, the prophet Elisha left the three kings, and returned to Samaria; whereupon the sacred historian gives a long detail of the several miracles which he wrought: viz. (b) That he increased a poor widow's oil to such a quantity as enabled her to pay her husband's debts, and preserve †² her two sons from bondage:

we are to consider that these countries abound with sheep, insomuch that Solomon offered an hundred and twenty thousand, at the dedication of the temple, 2 Chron. vii. 5. and the Reubenites drove from the Hagarites two hundred and fifty thousand, 1 Chron. v. 7. for as Bochart observes, their sheep frequently brought forth two at a time, and sometimes twice a year. The same learned man remarks, that in ancient times, when peoples riches consisted in cattle, this was the only way of paying tribute; for (as he quotes the passage out of Pliny) pecunia ipsa à pecore appellabatur: Etiam nunc in Tabulis Censoriis pascua dicuntur omnia, ex quibus populus reditus habet, quia diu hoc solum vectigal fuerat. *Nat. Hist.* lib. xviii. c. 3. It is observed by others likewise, that this great number of cattle was not a tribute which the Moabites were obliged to pay to the Israelites every year, but on some special occasion only; upon the accession of every new king, for instance, when they were obliged to express their homage in this manner, or to make satisfaction for some damages that the Israelites should at any time suffer from their invasions or revolts. *Patrick's* and *Le Clerc's* Commentaries.

(a) 2 Kings iii. 16.

† Not only the holy Scriptures, but several heathen writers likewise, do assure us of this, that in cases of great extremity, it was customary among people to

sacrifice to their gods whatever was most dear to them. Cæsar, in his war with the Gauls, tells us, that when they were afflicted with grievous diseases, or in time of war or great danger, they either offered men for sacrifices, or vowed that they would offer them; because they imagined that their gods could never be appeased unless one man's life was given for another's. No less a man than Grotius is of opinion, that this Moabitish king, in imitation of Abraham, sacrificed his son to the God of Israel, hoping thereby to appease his wrath, and to move the compassion of the kings that were besieging him: But the most general opinion is, that he offered this costly sacrifice to some false deity, and very likely to Chemosh, which was his national god, and generally thought to be the sun. [Indeed it is not probable, that he knew any thing of the command given to Abraham to sacrifice his son; if he did, he must have known likewise that the command was revoked in such a manner as must have convinced him, that human sacrifices were not acceptable to the God of Abraham.] *Calmet's* and *Le Clerc's* Commentaries.

(a) 2 Kings iv. 1, &c.

†² The Jewish law looked upon children as the proper goods of their parents, who had power to sell them for seven years, as their creditors had to compel them to do it in order to pay their debts; and from the Jews this custom was propagated to the

(a) That, to reward the wealthy Shunamite for his kindness and hospitality to him, he prevailed in his prayers with God, that his wife might have a child, and afterwards, when the child died, (b) restored him to life again: That while he was at Gilgal, he cured the noxious quality of the prophets † colloquintida pottage, by the injection of a little meal: (c) That there he multiplied twenty barley-loaves, and satisfied above an hundred persons with them; and (d) that there he made an ax which was fallen into the river, merely by throwing in a stick, rise up, and swim upon the surface of it: But the miracle which the sacred history more particularly insists on is the cure of Naaman's leprosy.

From 1 Kings
viii. to the end
of 2 Chron.

Naaman was general of the king of Syria's troops, a man famous for exploits in war, and in great esteem with his master, but he was a leper. At this time there seems to have been no good understanding between the two crowns; and yet the king of Syria, to recover so valuable a servant from his illness, wrote to the king of Israel, but in such terms as gave him some uneasy apprehensions. When Elisha understood this, he ordered that Naaman might be sent to him; and when he came with all his attendants and stately equipage, instead of receiving him in form, †² he sent his servant out to him, and bad him go †³ dip himself seven times in the river Jordan, and he would be cured. The proud Syrian, not understanding this treatment, and expecting, very likely, that the prophet, by some personal act, would have performed the cure, thought himself slighted, and was for returning home; but, being advised by those that were about him, that, since the prescription was so easy, to make the experiment at least would not be much, he went to the river, and, after having bathed seven times therein, found himself perfectly cured.

Rejoiced at his unexpected recovery, Naaman returned to Elisha, acknowledging, that there was no other God but the God of Israel; protesting, that from thence forward he would sacrifice to none but him; desiring, for that purpose, two mules loads †

Athenians, and from them to the Romans. The Romans, indeed, had the most absolute controul over their children. By the decree of Romulus they could imprison, beat, kill, or sell them for slaves. But Numa Pompilius first moderated this, and the emperor Dioclesian made a law that no free persons should be sold upon account of debt. The ancient Athenians had the like jurisdiction over their children, but Solon reformed this cruel custom: as indeed it seemed a little hard, that the children of a poor man, who have no manner of inheritance left them, should be compelled into slavery in order to pay their deceased father's debts: and yet this was the custom as appears from this passage, wherein the prophet does not pretend to reprove the creditor, but only puts the woman in a method to pay him. *Calmet's* and *Le Clerc's* Commentaries.

(a) 2 Kings iv. 8, &c.

(b) Ibid. Ver. 34.

† It is a plant so very bitter, that some have called it the "gall of the whole earth." It purges excessively, and is a sort of poison, if not qualified, and taken in a moderate quantity. *Calmet's* and *Patrick's* Commentaries.

(c) 2 Kings iv. 41.

(d) Ibid. vi. 5, 6.

†² Elisha's not appearing to receive the Syrian general is ascribed by some to the retired course of life which the prophets led; but then, why did he see him, and enter into conversation with him, when he returned from his cure? I should rather think, that it was not misbecoming the prophet upon this occa-

sion, to take some state upon him, and to support the character and dignity of a prophet of the Most High God; especially since this might be a means to raise the honour of his religion and ministry, and to give Naaman a righter idea of his miraculous cure, when he found that it was neither by the prayer nor presence of the prophet, but by the Divine power and goodness that it was effected. *Pool's* Annotations, and *Calmet's* Commentary.

†³ In conformity to the law, which requires that lepers, in order to their cleansing, should be sprinkled seven times, Lev. xiv. 7, &c. the prophet ordered Naaman to dip himself as often; but Jordan (as the Syrian argued) had no more virtue in it than other rivers; nor could cold water (of any kind) be a proper means for curing this distemper, whose root is a white waterish humour, that would increase, rather than be diminished, by any such application. *Patrick's* Commentary.

† He desired the earth of the land, because he thought it more holy and acceptable to God, and proper for his service; or because he would, by this token, declare his conjunction with the people of Israel in the true worship, and constantly put himself in mind of his great obligation to that God, from whose land this earth was taken. He might have had indeed enough of this earth without asking any one for it, but he desired the prophet to give it him, as believing, perhaps, that he who put such virtue into the waters of Israel, could put as much in the earth there-

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of the earth of the country, wherewith to build him an altar; deprecating any offence that might arise from his waiting on the king his master, when he went to worship in the temple of † Rimmon; and, in the conclusion, importuning the prophet to accept of a present, for the great cure that he had wrought upon him, which the other most †² positively refused.

But there was not the like disinterestedness in his servant Gehazi. He, thinking it unreasonable that so potent and wealthy a person should go off without paying for so signal a benefit, resolved to get something for himself; and therefore, unknown to any body, as he thought, he followed after Naaman, and, having soon overtaken him, forged a lie, that his master desired of the general to send him a talent of silver, and two changes of garments, for two sons of the prophets, who, since his departure, were come to visit him. The general was glad of this opportunity to oblige his master, and therefore pressed him to take two talents of silver with the garments, and sent two of his servants to carry them for him; from whom he received them before he came to his master's house, and deposited them, as he thought, in a safe place: But no sooner did he return into his master's presence, than he began to tax him with what he had been doing; which, when Gehazi denied, he †³ denounced his sentence, viz. that the leprosy whereof he had cured Naaman should adhere to him and his family for ever; which accordingly, that very moment, came to pass.

THE OBJECTION.

“**BUT** how wicked soever Gehazi might be, in purloining a little of Naaman's money, and making the man pay for his cure; yet his master, methinks, carries the complement a little too far, if not in refusing his present, at least in giving him toleration to continue in idolatry. He had now the fairest opportunity imaginable to make him a thorough convert, and, by working so great a miracle upon him, had acquired a proper authority to prescribe to him what he pleased: but when, instead of confirming

of, and make it as useful and beneficial to him in another way. These thoughts indeed were groundless and extravagant, but yet were excusable in an heathen and novice, that was not as yet sufficiently instructed in the true religion. *Pool's Annotations.*

† It is thought by the generality of interpreters, that, as the Syrians were great worshippers of the sun, this god is the same; and that the name Rimmon, or High, is given him by reason of his elevation. Grocius takes it for Saturn, because that planet is the highest of all; and Selden will have it to be the same with Elion, or the most high god of the Phœnicians. It is certain, that the word Rimmon is the name that the Syrians give to pomegranates, and therefore, as their country was full of pomegranate trees, whose fruit is not only of a delicious taste, but of great use likewise on account of the excellent liquor which it produces, they gave perhaps the name of pomegranate to their god, in the same manner that the Greeks and Latins gave that of Ceres to the goddess of corn. *Lamy's Introduction*, lib. iii. c. i. and *Jurieu*, *Hist. des Dogmes et Cultes*, part. iv. c. 10.

†² Elisha did not think it a thing simply unlawful

to receive gifts or presents, for we find him receiving them upon another occasion, 2 Kings iv. 41. but he did not hold it expedient in his present circumstances to do it, because he thought it would make for the honour of the true God and religion, to let the Syrians see the generous piety, charity, and kindness of his ministers and servants, and how much they despised all that worldly wealth and glory which the priests, or prophets of the Gentiles, so greedily sought after; that thereby Naaman might be confirmed in the religion he had embraced, and others, in like manner, incited to a love and liking of it. *Pool's Annotations.*

†³ And justly did he deserve it, since his crime had in it all these aggravations,—a greedy covetousness, which is idolatry; a profanation of God's name; a downright theft in keeping that to himself which was given for others; deliberate and impudent lying; a desperate contempt of God's omniscience, justice, and holiness; an horrible reproach cast upon the prophet and his religion; and a pernicious scandal given to Naaman, and every other Syrian that should chance to hear of it. *Pool's Annotations.*

him in the service of the true God, he permits him to go on in his old practice ' of bow-
ing himself in the house of Rimmon,' and to comply with the terms of a false religion,
rather than lose an advantageous employ, he certainly discovers too great an indul-
gence to Naaman's impiety, and too small a concern for the honour of God's true reli-
gion and worship.

From 1 Kings
viii. to the end
of 2 Chron.

Naaman, no doubt, had a great and honourable post about the king of Syria; but what is this to the purpose? Had he been a true convert to the Jewish religion, or had the prophet taken care to instruct him sufficiently in the rudiments thereof, all his riches and honours, all his offices and employments, nay, even life itself, he should have freely given up, rather than appear in the posture of a suppliant before an idol which he professed to despise, or gratify the greatest monarch upon earth, by so base a prostitution of his conscience; unless we can suppose, (what their speeches indeed seem to import) that, whether he served God or Rimmon, both he and the prophet esteemed it a thing indifferent.

This prophet indeed, in his own cause, is known to have been more zealous than he was in God's; otherwise (a) he would not have cursed so many ' little children in the name of the Lord;' and (what is wonderful) upon his cursing, caused two she-bears to come immediately out of the forest, and destroy no less than ' two and forty of them;' though how two bears could devour (for that is the expression) so very great a multitude is somewhat incredible.

But we need less wonder at this, when we find his predecessor in the prophetic office animated with the same spirit, and (b) causing fire to come down from heaven to destroy two captains, with their companies, for no other fault but bluntly delivering a message from the king, and perhaps in the very same words wherein they were commanded to deliver it. A vindictive temper we may perceive our Saviour reproves in his two disciples (c) James and John; and therefore we are at a loss to know why God should listen to the prayers of any man, (d) desiring that it should not rain upon the earth for the space of ' three years and six months,' when a drought of that continuance must inevitably have destroyed every thing; and when it was sent, not for the punishment of the inhabitants of the land for any particular sin we read of, but purely to aggrandise the prophet, and to put it in his power to say, that there (e) ' should be neither dew nor rain in these years but according to his word.'

If the prophet had such interest, and was in such high esteem with Almighty God, we cannot see what reason he had to flee his country upon the threats of an impotent woman, who, notwithstanding her ascendant over the king, had no power to control the Providence of God, under whose protection he was so securely placed, that he need not have feared what Jezebel could do unto him. To retreat from danger when he knew himself under such a safeguard, was acting an inconsistent part, and betraying the cause of God, when, (according to his own confession) (f) he, and he only, was left to defend it.

Moses indeed, as we read, fasted forty days and forty nights; but then he was in the mount with God. Our Blessed Saviour abstained from all manner of food for the like space of time, but then his human nature was supported by his Divine; but it is hard to imagine, how Elijah could travel for forty days and nights together, with no stronger sustenance than a little bread and water, unless we can suppose that the kind ravens that attended him at the brook Cherith so long were appointed to wait on him at this juncture likewise, (g) and to ' bring him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening,' all the while that he was upon his journey.

The misfortune is, however, that the word *Orebim*, which we render *ravens*, should

(a) *Christianity as Old as the Creation*, p. 263.
(d) *Christianity, &c. ibid.* (e) 1 Kings xvii. 1.

(b) *Ibid.* 265.
(f) *Ibid.* xix. 10.

(c) Luke ix. 54, 55.
(g) *Ibid.* xvii. 6.

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rather signify *merchants*, who traded in the market of Tyre, or Arabians that lived in places adjacent to the brook Cherith, and might therefore provide the prophet with necessities during his concealment; because we cannot conceive why ravens, greedy and voracious creatures, † unnatural to their own young ones, and declared unclean by the (a) law, should (of all others) be proper instruments to convey this wonderful food (for wonderful it is from whence they had it) to the prophet in his hiding-place; which Ahab, with all his industry, was not able to find out it seems, even though (b) ‘there was not a nation, or kingdom, where he had not sent to seek him,’ and yet all the while he was but in the next adjoining province, concealed in the widow of Zarephtha’s house.

But badly did Elijah requite God’s singular care and preservation of him, since he was so far from executing the Divine command in (c) ‘anointing Hazael to be the king of Syria, and Jehu king of Israel, that he never once went near them, but left it to be done by his successor Elisha, who himself, in like manner, declined the work, and made a young prophet his proxy. Nay, even in the most plausible act that Elijah did, viz. his destroying the prophets of Baal, there is this exception to be made, viz. that though the law of Moses condemned every one that introduced the worship of false gods to immediate death, yet we cannot see how either the priests of Baal were bound by that law, or how Elijah, who was but a private man, had any authority to execute it.

The truth is, (d) they could not but know that their god Baal was utterly unable to send down fire from heaven to consume their sacrifice; and therefore if they suffered, they suffered like a pack of fools, for accepting a challenge which they were conscious they could not answer, and putting the merits of their cause upon an unnecessary trial, wherein, without all peradventure, they were sure to miscarry.

But how ridiculous soever the Sacred History may make the prophets of Baal, it should not use the same freedom in exhibiting the actions of God in an unfair light; and yet this it does, when it makes the searcher of all hearts relent, and (e) suspend the execution of Ahab’s sentence, upon the account of his repentance, which (how formal soever it might appear) was, at the bottom, but false and fictitious. This it does, when it makes the Disposer of all events (f) send a lion to slay a man, merely for refusing to wound one of the sons of the prophets, though he does not declare for what reason he requested that inhuman favour of him. This it does, when it makes the Great Dispenser of all justice punish the children of Hiel, for their father’s profaneness in rebuilding Jericho, though it be contrary to his own declarations, that children shall not suffer for the wickedness of their parents, (g) ‘but every one die for his own iniquity.’ This it does, lastly, when it makes the Fountain of all purity and truth (h) hold conference with an evil and deceitful spirit, and enter into its measures of deluding Ahab, to go to the siege of Ramoth-Gilead, which was to his bane.

But, besides these grosser absurdities, there are some other passages in this period of history which seem destitute of the common appearances of probability; as that Jehoshaphat should send out itinerant preachers to instruct the people in their duty, when in every city of the Levites (which were dispersed over the whole nation) there were people appointed for that purpose: that the same Jehoshaphat, who had but a small part of the kingdom which David enjoyed, should so far surpass him in the number of his forces, as to have under his command an army ‘of eleven hundred and sixty thou-

† Such is the *ἀστροφία*, or want of natural love of these creatures to their young ones, that, as naturalists report, they forsake them before they are fledged; but the Providence of God takes care to feed them with worms, which are produced by the dung, and out of the carcasses that have been brought into their nests, till they be able to fly and provide for them-

selves: And to this the Psalmist, speaking of God, “who feedeth the young ravens when they call upon him,” seems to allude, Psal. cxlvii. 9.

(a) Lev. xi. 15.

(b) 1 Kings xviii. 10.

(c) Ibid. xix. 15.

(d) LeClerc’s Comment.

(e) 1 Kings xxi. 29.

(f) Ibid. xx. 36.

(g) Jer. xxxi. 30.

(h) 2 Chron. xviii. 19, 20.

sand men,' without reckoning the garrisons that were in their strong holds; and, lastly, that the wall of the city of Aphek (how spacious soever it may be supposed) should, by its fall, be able to bury in its ruins no less (a) 'than seven and twenty thousand men;' which is enough to stagger all human faith."

From 1 Kings
viii. to the end
of 2 Chron.

THE most material part of the discourse which passed between Naaman and Elisha is delivered in these words:—(b) "Thy servant (says Naaman) will henceforth offer neither burnt-offering nor sacrifice unto other gods, but unto the Lord: In this thing the Lord pardon thy servant, that when my master goeth into the house of Rimmon, and he leaneth on my hand, and I bow myself in the house of Rimmon, the Lord pardon thy servant in this thing: And Elisha said unto him, Go in peace." "Go in peace" was a common form of valediction among the Jews, wherewith Elisha might dismiss Naaman without any further answer to his request, or resolution to his doubt: for the prophet, we must suppose, in this whole transaction, was under the immediate influence and direction of the Spirit of God; and therefore, if the Spirit of God thought proper to withhold any further instruction from the Syrian general, it was not in the prophet's power, though he had "given him his house full of silver and gold," (c) (as Balaam put the case) "to go beyond the word of the Lord, to do more or less." Considering then (d) that Naaman was now in the infancy of his conversion, and as yet not able to receive the higher precepts of perfection; that himself was conscious of his own offence, and wanted not therefore so much to be instructed as encouraged, and strengthened in the Lord; and that the matters wherein he seemed to doubt, were not of such mighty importance as to concern the essence and foundation of religion; considering these things, I say, we may soon perceive the reason why Elisha accepted of his renunciation of a false, and profession of a true religion, his declared aversion to the worship of idols, and fixed resolution to serve the Lord only, as a sufficient advance in his present circumstances.

Israelites indeed, and such as were descended from the stock of Jacob, were obliged to the observation of the whole Mosaic law; but strangers and aliens, when they came to be admitted proselytes of the gate, were confined only to the worship of the true God, and the practice of such duties as were moral and social: And therefore, when Naaman professed himself a worshipper of the Most High God only, and declared without that his attending his master into the temple of Rimmon was not with any religious purpose, but purely in performance of the duty of his office, the prophet had reason good to bid him go in peace, or (as the words may import) to give himself no uneasiness about the matter.

For though we pretend not to say, with some rabbinical doctors, that as Naaman was no Jew, but a foreigner and proselyte only, (e) he was not obliged to abstain from all external worship of idols (as the Jews confessedly were) so long as he continued in another country; yet it is generally agreed, that we are bound to shew the same respect to our superiors, and those that are set in authority over us, (so long as we do not injure our consciences thereby) in one place as in another; and (f) that therefore Naaman might very innocently retain his dignity and high office at court, even as Joseph did in Egypt, and Daniel in Babylon; might accompany his master into Rimmon's temple, nay, and bow together with him, in compliance to his infirmity or convenience, (who could not so well bow if the other stood upright) so long as this was a service done to the man (as Tertullian (g) reasons upon the like occasion) and not to the idol;

(a) 1 Kings xx. 30.
notations on 2 Kings v. 19.

(b) 2 Kings v. 17, 18.

(c) Numb. xxii. 18.

(d) Pool's An-

(e) Grotius, in locum, and Selden, de Jure Nat. et Gent. lib. ii. c. 11.

(f) Calmet's Dissert. sur la Priere que Naaman, &c.

(g) Vid. de Idololat. lib. xvi. xvii.

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so long as this was an act purely external, without any of those inward sentiments of respect which constitute the essence of adoration.

"This, I own, is the common solution; but it does not entirely please me. It justifies an action which Naaman himself was not well satisfied in. It leaves upon the prophet an imputation of too much lenity and indulgence, and, upon the general, that of too much hypocrisy and dissimulation. Had Naaman's example, in this sense, been made a precedent, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, in the court of Nebuchadnezzar, and old Eleazar amidst Antiochus's officers, might have escaped persecution. (a) They, at the sound of the instruments, might have fallen down before the image, not out of any principle of adoration, but in pure obedience to the king's orders; and (b) Eleazar might have evaded the eating of swines flesh, if he would but have let it been reported that he did eat it; but we find no such prevarication in either of these, and therefore we can hardly think that this is the right solution."

(c) Now, since repentance has regard to what is past, and to ask pardon for an offence already committed is much more natural than to ask pardon for what we purpose for the future to commit, (which, in matters of morality, is a kind of contradiction), it seems not improbable that the words should be rendered (as the original will fairly bear it) in the preter tense. "Lord, pardon thy servant, that when my master went into the house of Rimmon to worship, and he leaned on my hand, and I bowed myself there, the Lord pardon thy servant in this thing." For how great would the incongruity be, if Naaman, who had just before declared his renunciation of idolatry, should now confess his readiness to relapse into the same crime, and desire God's pardon for it beforehand? Whereas, to ask pardon for what he had done amiss, and to desire the prophet's intercession with God in that behalf, argued a mind truly sensible of his former transgression, and very much resolved to avoid it for the future: And accordingly (d) it is supposed, that upon his return home he refused to worship Rimmon any more, and was thereupon dismissed from being general of the king's forces.

(e) Bethel, we all know, was one of the cities where Jeroboam had set up a golden calf, a place strangely addicted to idolatry, and whose inhabitants had no small aversion to Elisha, as being the servant and successor of one who had been a professed enemy to their wicked worship, and himself no less an opposer of it. It is reasonable to suppose, therefore, that the children (if they were children, for the word *naarim* may signify *grown youths* as well) who mocked Elisha were excited and encouraged thereunto by their parents; and therefore the judgment was just in God's punishing the wickedness of these parents by the death of their children, who, though they suffered in this life, had the happiness to be rescued from the danger of an idolatrous education, which might have been of fatal tendency both to their present and future state.

In the mean time, it must be acknowledged, that the insolence of these mockers (whether we suppose them children or youths) was very provoking, (f) forasmuch as they ridiculed not only a man, whose very age commanded reverence, but a prophet likewise, whose character in all ages was accounted sacred, nay, and even God himself, whose honour was struck at in the reproaches cast upon his servant; and that too in one of his most glorious and wonderful works, his assumption of Elijah into heaven. For, "Go up thou bald head, go up thou bald head," (besides the bitterness of the contempt expressed in the repetition of the words) shews that they made a mere jest of any such translation; and therefore, in mere banter, bid Elisha go up, whither, as he pretended, his friend and master was gone before.

These provocations, one would think, were enough to draw an imprecation from the

(a) Daniel iii. 12.

(b) 2 Maccab. vi. 21, &c.

(d) *Bedford's Scripture Chronology*, lib. vi. c. 2.

(f) *Pool's Annotations* in locum.

(c) *Calmet's Dissertations*.

(e) *Pool's Annotations* in locum.

prophet; but this imprecation did not proceed from any passion or private resentment of his own, but merely from the command and commission of his God; who, for the terror and caution of other profane persons and idolaters, as well as for the maintenance of the honour and authority of his prophets, confirmed the word which had gone out of his servant's mouth.

From 1 Kings
viii. to the end
of 2 Chron.

The like is to be said of the destruction which Elijah called down from heaven upon the two captains and their companies who came to apprehend him: That he did this, not out of any hasty passion or revenge, but purely in obedience to the Holy Spirit, wherewith he was animated, and in zeal for the honour and glory of God, which, in the person of his prophet, were grossly abused.

The officers that were sent to him call him indeed a man of God; but by the answer which the prophet returned, we may learn that they called him so only by way of contempt and derision. (a) As they could not be ignorant, however, that Ahaziah was highly offended at Elijah, and had sent them for no other purpose but to bring him to punishment (b) for having denounced his death; if they thought proper to obey the king in such unrighteous proceedings, rather than the laws of nature and religion, which forbid us to be instruments in cruelty and wrong, they deserved the fate they met with: And our blessed Saviour does not blame Elijah's conduct in this respect, but his disciples only, for their perverse imitation of it, from a spirit of resentment and revenge, and under a trivial provocation in comparison of what was offered to the prophet. The truth is, God, in this instance of severity, hath taught us, that he will have his prophets revered, (c) because they are allied to him, and every affront put upon them he resents as an indignity to himself; and therefore the sad end of the two captains and their companies, who came to apprehend the prophet of the Lord, was designed monumentally to deter future ages from the like provocations; and to remind us of the precept which God himself hath given us, (d) "Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm."

[In the ordinary governments of modern times, military men are certainly not culpable for obeying the commands of their sovereign, to arrest a man accused of a crime against the state, even when the accusation is false and groundless; but the government of Israel was no ordinary government. Jehovah was the Supreme civil Magistrate of Israel as well as of Judah, and Ahaziah was but his viceroy, who was bound to administer the affairs of the kingdom by the law of Moses. This the captains, who perished, knew or ought to have known. They were therefore deliberately supporting the first minister of the state, for Ahaziah was nothing more, in rebellion against his Sovereign, by whom Elijah had been employed to do the very things which had given such offence to their immediate master. That Elijah was the minister of God, the miracles which he had repeatedly wrought left no room for doubt; the conduct of Ahaziah, compared with the law of the land, left as little room for doubt that he was an impious and notorious rebel; and the very order, which they with insolence endeavoured to fulfil, was a palpable act of rebellion and high treason. They suffered therefore for their crimes against the state, for executing the commands of a subject in open rebellion against his Sovereign, and not for their personal offences against the man Elijah; and they suffered by the immediate hand of the Sovereign himself, who alone could send down fire from heaven to consume them.]

"(e) O Elijah! (says the author of Ecclesiasticus) how wast thou honoured in thy wondrous deeds, and who may glory like unto thee? Like thee, (f) who wast vouchsafed the sight of God's glorious and majestic presence; (g) who hadst angels sent to

(a) *Le Clerc's Commentary* in locum.
ted, part ii. page 124.
(g) 1 Kings xix. 5.

(d) 1 Chron. xvi. 22.

(b) 2 Kings i. 4.

(e) Eccclus. xlviii. 4.

(c) *Scripture Vindica-*
(f) 1 Kings xix.

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comfort and refresh thee when thou wast weary ; (a) who hadst fire sent thee from heaven to avenge thee of thine enemies when they came to insult thee ; (b) who hadst thy body in a bright chariot translated into heaven, without undergoing the fate of mortals ; and (what was not the least of thy prerogatives) who hadst, (c) whilst thou lived, the power of locking or unlocking the store-houses of heaven, at thy pleasure and by thy prayers." It was, doubtless, to magnify his office (which now began to be depreciated not a little) that God authorised his prophet to accost Ahab with such marvellous assurance, as if the dispensation of the rain and dew of heaven, for such a determinate time, had been entirely at his disposal : But we mistake the matter widely, if we suppose that the prophet had any part (farther than he was God's minister and messenger to declare the thing) in bringing this famine upon the land. All judgments of this kind are the immediate work of God : And, " as (d) he does not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men ;" so, if we will but turn to (e) the preceding chapter, we shall find an account of such open and avowed idolatry, and such bold contempt of the Divine authority, both in the prince and people, as will sufficiently justify the severity of God in bringing this national judgment upon them. For well may the people be supposed to be generally depraved, when we find it recorded of their prince, that (f) " he did more to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel that were before him." [When the son of Sirach therefore said, that Elijah " had fire sent him from heaven to avenge him of his enemies when they came to insult him," and that, " whilst he lived, he had the power of locking or unlocking the store-houses of heaven at his pleasure," he used expressions merely rhetorical, which he never meant to be literally interpreted, and which, literally interpreted, are not true. It is not true, that during the whole of his life he had the power of locking or unlocking the store-houses of heaven ; for that was done at his prayers only once by the power of God, to punish the rebellion and apostacy of the Israelites ; and, as we have already observed, the fire came down from heaven, not to avenge Elijah of his personal enemies, when they came to insult *him*, but to punish impious soldiers employed by their superior in an act of high treason and insult to the God and King of Israel, in the person of his accredited minister.]

We own, indeed, that Elijah did not in every thing act a consistent part : He who but lately was so bold and intrepid as to present himself before Ahab, who had been long in quest of him, in order to make him suffer (g) as the disturber of the public peace, is now frightened at the menaces of a silly woman ; and thereupon quits his country, and flies for his life, notwithstanding the late signal interposition of Providence in his favour. But what shall we say to this ? (h) Elias " was a man subject to the like passions as we are ;" and it was probably in respect to this his infirmity that the apostle made this reflection upon him. (i) He knew Jezebel, and that she had all the faults incident to her sex in a superlative degree ; that she was fierce, cruel, vindictive, and implacable ; that, in slaying the priests of Baal, he had incurred her displeasure ; and that, to revenge herself, she had all the power of the kingdom under her command. These notions ran in his head, and made such an impression upon his spirits, as deprived him of that resolution and manly courage for which he was heretofore so remarkable ; nor was there wanting a wise design of Providence in suffering this timidity to fall upon his servant.

St Paul tells us of himself, that, (k) " lest he should be exalted above measure, through the abundance of revelations, there was given unto him a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan, to buffet him (as he repeats it again), lest he should be exalted above

(a) 2 Kings i. 10, &c. (b) Ibid. ii. 11. (c) Ibid. vii. 1. (d) Lament. iii. 33.
(e) Ibid. ii. (f) 1 Kings xvi. 33. (g) Ibid. xviii. 17. (h) James v. 17.
(i) Calmet's Commentary on 1 Kings xix. 3. (k) 2 Cor. xii. 7.

measure." And, in like manner, we have reason to believe, that (a) God, upon this occasion, might withdraw that spirit of intrepidity, wherewith at other times he fortified Elijah's mind, on purpose to shew him his natural imbecility, and the necessity he had at all times of the Divine assistance; and on purpose to suppress all the little sentiments of pride and arrogance that might possibly arise in his breast, upon the contemplation of the gifts and graces which he had bestowed on him, and the many great miracles that were wrought by his hands; and that, thereupon, if he did "glory, he might glory in the Lord," and not dare to take any part of his honour to himself.*

From 1 Kings
viii. to the end
of 2 Chron.

(b) The Jews have made a comparison between Elijah and Moses in several particulars, and given Moses the preference, especially in the matter of his forty days fast: For Elijah, they suppose, did every day eat and drink, when he happened to find any sustenance in the wilderness; whereas Moses had nothing to support him but only the miraculous power of God. The text, however, is far from intimating that Elijah ate any thing but what the angel first brought him; for (c) "he went, in the strength of that meat, forty days and forty nights, unto Horeb, the Mount of God;" whereas, had he taken any nourishment by the way, it had not been by the strength of that food that he performed his journey.

What that food was, the Scripture has taken care to inform us, viz. that it was "simple bread and water" (to make the miracle more remarkable), but such as was of far greater and more durable virtue than ordinary; and such as gave a life and vigour far surpassing the effects of any other nourishment. Whether angels, in the celestial state, are purely spiritual, or clothed with some material form, but much more subtle and refined than any we know of here below, is a question much agitated among the schools: But if, for the present, we should allow the affirmative, "the food of angels," and what may be called the sustenance of their glorious but finite beings, need not be accounted altogether an allegory. It is certain that, upon (d) their appearance in human shape, they did frequently eat the common food of men; that our blessed Saviour, after the assumption of his glorious body, (e) "ate part of a broiled fish and of an honey-comb;" nor may we forget, upon this occasion, his words at the paschal supper, (f) "I will not henceforth drink of this fruit of the vine, until that day that I drink it new with you in my father's kingdom." All which will be enough to countenance the opinion, that the food which was brought to Elijah at this time was of celestial growth and virtue, whereby creatures of a superior excellency may possibly, at certain periods, have their natures renewed (as the tree of life, in the state of paradise, is supposed to have been intended for that purpose), and to live on to eternal ages. No wonder then, that food of such a rare quality as to deserve the delegation of an angel from heaven to bring it, should have all the virtue and all the efficacy that we read of.

But, waving this speculation, we may suppose the repast to have been nothing more than common bread and water; yet who can doubt, but that God, either by retarding the faculties of concoction and perspiration, or by preserving the spirits and juices from dissipation, might make its strength and nourishment subsist for the time specified? It is but God's speaking the word in this case, and the thing is done. The least beck of

(a) *Calmet's Commentary*, and *Pool's Annotations*.

* [This is a sufficient apology for Elijah's flight, if that flight stood in need of an apology; but the truth is, that it stood in need of none. Jezebel sent word to him that she would put him to death in the space of twenty-four hours; he knew that he could not by his own power prevent the execution of that threat; he received no command from God to remain in Jezreel, as he had to go and shew himself to Ahab when equally incensed against him as the disturber of the public peace; he therefore inferred, and justly infer-

red, that his duty on this occasion was not to remain in Jezreel, but to flee for his life. Our blessed Lord commanded his disciples, when persecuted in one city to flee unto another; and if Elijah had acted otherwise when thus threatened by Jezebel, he would have displayed not the intrepidity of a prophet, but the spirit of fanaticism.]

(b) *Patrick's Commentary*, on 1 Kings xix. 8.

(c) *Ibid.* ver. 8.

(d) Gen. xviii. 8.

(e) Luke xxiv. 42.

(f) Matth. xxvi. 29.

A. M. 3001,
&c. or 4507.
Ant. Chris.
1003, &c.
or 904.

his will, can make the same meal that usually serves us for four and twenty hours support us for forty days, and much longer if he pleases. That meat of any kind should sustain us for four and twenty hours (if rightly considered) is a miracle†; and that the like proportion should do it for the space of forty days is still but a miracle, and with the same facility that God does the one he can do the other: So true is that observation which our blessed Saviour borrows from Moses, (a) "Man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

And indeed, no person ever had so large experience of the truth of this observation as had the prophet now before us, who was so long sustained, not only by the wonderful increase of the widows oil and meal, but by the daily ministry likewise, and attendance of ravens. For whatever some may dream of merchants or Arabians, who might take pity of Elijah in his retirement, and send him provisions every day, besides that the original word (as (b) Bochart has sufficiently evinced) never signifies merchants, and that there were no Arabians inhabiting the coasts where Elijah lay concealed, it can hardly be imagined, but that the place of his retreat would have soon been discovered to Ahab, had either merchants, or other inhabitants of the country, been at any time acquainted with it.

What industry that wicked king used to find out the prophet, wherever he absconded, we may learn from the information of good Obadiah, viz. that he had ransacked every nation where he could reasonably think that he was concealed, and, when he found him not, took an oath of the people that he was not among them. For (c) though Ahab could not compel other nations to take an oath to that purpose, yet, considering the great interest he had among the neighbouring princes, he might easily prevail with the great men of each kingdom to give him that satisfaction. If we look into his alliances, we shall find, that the king of Tyre was his father-in-law, and the king of Moab tributary to him; that Jehoshaphat was his friend and relation, and that the king of Edom was dependant on Jehoshaphat; that (d) as the kings of Arabia and Syria corresponded with Solomon, so very likely they were confederate with Ahab; that one of their articles might be to deliver up to each other all their fugitive or banished subjects upon demand; and that this was the foundation of his desire and expectance of this oath: And yet, notwithstanding all this strict and diligent enquiry, Elijah might live concealed in the widow of Zarephtha's house, because he had laid sufficient obligations upon her, both in preserving her from the danger of the famine, and in restoring her dead son to life again, to use all possible care to conceal him. But to return to Elijah's ravens.

Though we should allow that they are creatures voracious, and unnatural to their young ones, yet the more unfit instruments they seemed to be, the more they magnified the Almighty power of him who controlled their natural appetites while he employed them; (e) and (if there was a moral instruction in it, as St Chrysostom fancies) the more they might mollify the prophet's heart toward the deluded Israelites, by seeing those very creatures that were cruel to their young kind to him. Though we should allow, that they were creatures legally unclean, yet (as it was for the meat, and not for the touch, that they were accounted so) this we must grant was a case extraordinary, wherein the ceremonial law was over-ruled by necessity, and by the lawgiver's dispensation. There is this to be said, however, in defence of God's choice of ravens for this purpose, viz. that as they are solitary birds, and delight to live about brooks of wa-

† [This is loose and improper language, since nothing can be a *miracle* that is done in the ordinary course of events. It is however by the mere volition of God that any thing is so done; and the volition of God is just as able to support a man by a morsel of bread for forty days as for four hours.]

(a) Deut. viii. 3. and Matth. iv. 4.

(b) Hieroz. part. ii. lib. ii. c. 13.

(c) Pool's Annotations, on 1 Kings xviii. 10.

(d) 1 Kings x. 15, 29.

(e) Patrick's Commentary on 1 Kings xvii. 6.

ter, so are they accustomed to seek out for provisions, and to carry them to the places of their abode; upon which account they were no improper creatures for God to employ upon this service: especially if what St Jerom tells us may be credited, viz. that one of these birds brought Paul, the first hermit, half a loaf every day, and, when St Anthony came to visit him, it brought him a whole one, to answer the wants "of these two soldiers of Jesus Christ;" (as (a) he words it) but whence it had this, as well as whence Elijah's ravens had their supply, we pretend not to tell; and had rather acknowledge our ignorance in such like speculations, than take up with uncertain and sometimes absurd conjectures *.

From 1 Kings
viii. to the end
of 2 Chron.

There are two exceptions more which are generally made to Elijah's conduct, viz. his omission in not anointing Hazael to be king of Syria, and Jehu king of Israel; and his cruelty, in destroying the priests of Baal without a proper authority. Now, in answer to the former of these, it should be observed, that the words *go* and *anoint*, may not be a positive command, but only a discretionary permission so to do. The prophet had been sorely complaining to God of the wickedness and idolatry of the Israelites, and of the bloody persecutions of their rulers. (b) "I have been very zealous for the Lord God of Hosts, says he; for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, and thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword, and I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life to take it away:" whereupon God (after having shewn him, (c) by some symbolical representation, how able he was to avenge him of his adversaries) bids him go and anoint such and such persons to be kings; as if he had said, (d) "Thou desirest of me that I should destroy the idolaters of Israel, and such as have a design upon thy life; but, in order to that, thou hast nothing to do but to go and ap-

(a) *Ad adventum tuum, militibus suis Christus duplicavit annonam, Hieronym. de Vita Pauli.*

* It was very foolish, if it proceeded from no worse motive, to put the ridiculous legend of Anthony on the same footing with the history of Elijah. Anthony was the founder of *monachism*, which, far from being essential to the Christian religion, has been the source of some of its greatest corruptions; and the tales which are told of his miracles, and many conflicts with demons, are now abandoned as absurd fictions by every man of learning; as well in the church of Rome as in the Protestant churches. The miracles of Elijah were intimately connected with the *theocracy* of Israel, which was instituted for preserving in the world the knowledge of the Divine unity. That theocracy was then administered by the idolater Ahab, as it had been by a series of idolaters before him; and the purpose of its institution would have been completely defeated, had it not been maintained by a succession of prophets armed with power to thwart in some degree the measures of those idolatrous princes. As Ahab was the most hardened idolater that had ever swayed the sceptre of Israel, so was Elijah the greatest prophet that had ever been raised up to maintain the unity of God, and to restore the authority of the law of Moses. His life was therefore miraculously preserved as essential to the theocratic government of Israel, which was itself necessary to the preservation of true religion. In his case, if in any, there was surely a *dignus vindice nodus*; whilst the pretended miracles of Anthony were wrought in support of the first

corruptions of Christianity! That *ravens* were animals fit to be employed for the preservation of the prophet, is very obvious; for they are carnivorous birds, and in a country like Israel, where altars were hourly smoking, and oxen and sheep killed, under every green tree, they could be at no loss to find either the bread or the flesh which they were instinctively prompted to carry twice every day for his subsistence. "It is a fact, says Mr King (a), now well known, that eagles, and ravens, and all birds of prey, do, at the time they have young ones, and even sometimes on other occasions, plunder the country all around them, in order to carry flesh and food of various kinds to their nests, and to feed their offspring. And with this fact the inhabitants near the Cevennes are so well acquainted, that the shepherds there, in the neighbourhood of the nests of those wild birds, contrive to serve themselves with meat for their own tables, at this very day, by means of these birds; climbing up to their nests, when the old ones fly from them in quest of more prey, and taking away from the young what the old had left there." There is no reason to think that the old prophet had occasion to climb for his food, as his purveyors were under the immediate controul of that Providence which miraculously watched over him; but as he was not interdicted the use of fire in his banishment, he might easily make a fire of dry sticks to roast the meat, if it was brought to him raw, which is surely the most probable supposition.]

(b) 1 Kings xix. 10. (c) *Ibid.* ver. 11, 12, 13.

(d) *Le Clerc's Commentary* on 1 Kings xix. 15.

A. M. 3001, point two other persons to be kings over Israel and Syria, and they will avenge both
&c. or 4507. thy quarrel and mine.”
Ant. Chris.
1003, &c.
or 904.

(a) But allowing the words to be a positive command, we may suppose, that when Elijah, by his prophetic spirit, perceived what a grievous destruction the exaltation of these two persons, to the thrones of Israel and Syria, would bring upon his native country, he petitioned God to delay the execution of this his order, at least, for some time, and obtained his request. This indeed is a circumstance that we do not meet with in Scripture; but in so short an history as this of the Hebrews is, we may well be allowed to supply some things that seem to be omitted, when this may be done without offering any violence to the words of the text, and especially when there is an analogy, in other parts of the history to bear us out.

Now, in relation to one of these, viz. Hazael, who was afterwards king of Syria, it is said, that when he came to enquire of Elisha concerning his master Benhadad's sickness, the prophet (b) “settled his countenance upon him stedfastly, and wept; whereupon Hazael said, Why weepeth my Lord? And he answered, Because I know the evil that thou wilt do unto the children of Israel. Their strong holds wilt thou set on fire, and their young men wilt thou slay with the sword, and wilt dash their children, and rip up their women with child:” And from this passage we have some grounds to think, that Elijah, upon the like prospect of his nation's calamity, might desire of God, if not a revocation of his command, at least a delay in the execution of it; and that this was the reason why neither of these kings were anointed by him.

[The truth however is, that we have no occasion to supply any supposed omission in the Sacred History, or to frame any hypothesis whatever for the vindication of the conduct of Elijah in this instance. A succession of prophets appears to have been as necessary to the constitution of Israel in church and state, as a succession of clergy, authorised to preach and administer the sacraments, is to the constitution of the Christian church. Our Blessed Lord, when he gave his last commission to his apostles, said, “Go ye therefore and teach *all nations*, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you alway, even *unto the end of the world.*” Our Lord knew well that the apostles were neither to live to the end of the world, nor even to preach the gospel themselves in all the nations which then existed; but what they could not do personally, either has been done already, or will in time be done, by their successors in office by virtue of this commission originally given to them: And such was the case with respect to Elijah and Elisha. From Elijah's zeal and intrepidity we may rest assured, that some powerful reason prevented him from anointing in his own person, either Jehu or Hazael; but those princes were actually anointed by Elisha, who, he was even then told, was “to be prophet in his room,” or, in other words, his successor in office. They were anointed too by virtue of this commission given to him, for we read of no new commission for the purpose given to Elisha; and though Jehu was actually anointed by one of the sons of the prophets, the young man acted by authority derived from the prophet himself; and the anointing gave to Jehu a Divine right to the throne of Israel, just as baptism, administered at this day by a deacon, admits the person baptised into the church of Christ, by virtue of the commission to baptise all nations originally given to the eleven apostles.]

What notions the worshippers of Baal might have of the power of their God, we cannot tell; but as sending down fire from heaven (c) was not above the reach of evil spirits, and some lying traditions might perhaps have descended to them concerning the exploits of their Baal in particular, (d) who, as he was thought to be the sun, and to

(a) *Le Clerc's Commentary* on 1 Kings xix. 15.
(d) *Patrick's Commentary* on 1 Kings xviii. 26.

(b) 2 Kings viii. 11, 12.

(c) Job. i. 16

exceed all heavenly bodies in heat, might, upon this grand occasion, as they thought, exert his power, and burn up their sacrifice; they held it the wisest way to accept of the prophet's challenge. The prophet's challenge indeed was upon such fair terms, that (whatever notions they might have of their god) they must have forfeited all their credit with the people, had they pretended to decline it: And therefore, rather than do this, they chose to venture all upon the hazard of an after-game, hoping, that either they might have an opportunity of conveying fire among the wood clandestinely, or that Elijah would fail in his attempt as well as they, and so both stand upon equal ground; or that, if he succeeded, the thing might not be done so cleverly, but that there might be room for some cavils and exceptions to be raised against it.

Upon these presumptions they might enter the lists; and, when they were so shamefully defeated, the prophet, (a) as an extraordinary minister of God's vengeance upon sinners (especially when the magistrate so grossly neglected his duty), had sufficient authority to execute (b) the sentence of death passed upon them by the Lord of life and death, as perverters of the law, and teachers of idolatry; as authors of cruelty, and inciters of Jezebel, (c) to murder the prophets of the Lord; and as cheats and impostors, to whose execution the people concurred, their princes gave their consent, and their king (as astonished at the late stupendous miracle) could make no opposition. [The truth is, that the prophet, far from being a private man as the objection supposes, was acting by a commission from the Sovereign of the kingdom, against whom Ahab had long been in a state of rebellion, in which the priests of Baal were his principal abettors. These men had forfeited their lives by the laws of the kingdom—laws which Ahab could neither suspend nor repeal, and which Elijah had proved himself to have been constitutionally authorised and empowered to enforce; and had he not on this occasion exercised the authority with which he was vested, he would himself have been a rebel and traitor like them. These pitiful objections therefore to the conduct of this illustrious prophet are founded in ignorance of the constitution of the kingdom of Israel, which had hardly one resemblance to the constitution of modern kingdoms; for its principal object was the support of religion, whilst the true object of other governments is the preservation of public peace and private property; religion being taken under their protection only as necessary to the attainment of that object.]

Whether Ahab's repentance, upon the commination of God's judgments, was sincere or superficial only, has been a matter of some debate among divines. It is certain that, in consideration of it, God revoked, at least in part, the sentence which he had denounced against him, and transferred it upon his posterity. And (d) yet we do not find him producing any "fruits meet for repentance;" either renouncing his superstitions, or destroying his idols, or restoring Naboth's vineyard, or re-establishing the true worship of God. Struck with the prophet's menaces, and dreading the effects of his predictions, he put on the garb of a penitent; he wept, he sighed, he fasted and bemoaned himself: But how came God, who inspects the hearts, and cannot be taken with external shew, to have any respect to this? Such esteem has he (according to some) for true repentance and reformation, that he was willing to reward the very appearance of it. But this is an answer that comports not so well with the purity and holiness of God: and therefore we should rather chuse to say, that Ahab's repentance at this time was true, though imperfect; and his sorrow sincere, though of no long continuance; and that, had he persisted in the good resolutions he had then taken up, God would have remitted him, not only the temporal, but the eternal punishment likewise that was due to his sin. In the mean time, this instance of the Divine lenity is left upon record to encourage the first essays of our repentance, and to give us assurance of this,—That

(a) *Pool's Annotations* on 1 Kings xviii. 40.

(b) Deut. xiii. 6. 9.—xvii. 2. 7.

(c) 1 Kings xviii. 4.

(d) *Calmet's Commentary*.

A. M. 3001,
&c. or 4507.
Ant. Chris.
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our good and gracious God, (a) "who keepeth mercy for thousands, and forgiveth iniquity, transgression, and sin, (b) will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax, but bring forth judgment unto truth."

But the same God who professes himself the forgiver of transgression and sin, declares withal, that (c) "he will not clear the guilty, but visit the iniquity of the fathers upon the children." In the case of Hiel, that impious rebuilders of Jericho, God was obliged, in order to fulfil the prophecy, to transfer the punishment due to the father upon his sons, because the form of Joshua's malediction is, (d) "Cursed be the man before the Lord, that raiseth up, and buildeth this city Jericho: He shall lay the foundation thereof in his first-born, and in his youngest son shall he set up the gates of it:" and as this malediction was kept upon record, and a thing well known, the people would have had but a slender conception of God's justice, or rather the judgment would have passed without observation, had Hiel alone (whose death might have been imputed to his old age) been cut off in the course of his building this city. But now, by taking his children, one after another, as the building advanced, the hand of God was visible, the denunciation of his servant verified, and a proper caution given to the whole nation, not to despise his patience and long-suffering, because they could not but see, that, upon their persisting in their impenitence, all his threats and comminations would, sooner or later, most certainly come to pass. [To accomplish this object, however, we are not to suppose that any principle of natural justice was violated. Hiel's sons were probably as guilty as himself; for if they had been perfectly innocent, their united influence would surely have been sufficient to prevail with him to abandon his impious and daring enterprise, especially when he saw the prediction begun to be fulfilled in the death of the first-born. But the nation was overrun with idolatry; the law totally neglected; the prophecy of Joshua perhaps generally forgotten; and Hiel and his family appear to have been zealots, if not for the worship of Baal, certainly for neglect of the worship of Jehovah. If such was the case, the young men were justly punished for their own offences, at the same time that an important prophecy was fulfilled; and if it had not been the case, they would surely have protested against their father's conduct, and have taken refuge themselves in the kingdom of Judah.]

Hiel himself, indeed, is not concerned in the prophecy; and therefore no mention is made in Scripture of what fate befel him. But, from the impartiality of God's justice, we have reason to suppose, (e) that, after he had lived to be an eye-witness of his children's untimely death, himself was cut off by some sore judgment; or, that if he escaped, his present impunity was his greatest misery, forasmuch as it continued his torment in the sad and lasting remembrance of his sons that were lost through his folly; or else was a means to harden his heart for the infliction of such greater punishments as God had reserved for him.

It is certainly an argument either of gross ignorance, or of a very corrupt and depraved mind, to make the condescensions of Scripture matter of exception against it, and to find fault with the sacred penman, because he endeavours, by apt allusions and representations, to bring down Spiritual and Divine things to the measure of our mean and shallow capacities.

(f) The Jews conceived of God in heaven as of a king seated on his throne; and that good and bad angels, the one standing on his right hand and the other on his left, were the appointed executioners of his orders, either to reward or punish his subjects. And as princes upon earth do generally nothing of moment without advising with their council and chief officers, so the prophet represents the Almighty God as deliberating with his heavenly courtiers what course he had best to take, in order to bring Ahab to

(a) Exod. xxxiv. 7.
(e) *Pool's* Annotations.

(b) Isaiah xlii. 3.
(f) *Calmet's* Commentary.

(c) Exod. xxxiv. 7.

(d) Josh. vi. 26.

destruction. Amidst this consultation, some suggest one expedient and some another ; but none takes with God, until a lying spirit steps out, and offers his service, which God, after some examination into his abilities, accepts. From 1 Kings viii. to the end of 2 Chron.

But now no man, I think, can have such a crude conception of the Divine Providence, as to think that this is the method of God's governing the world ; that he, who is the fountain of all power and wisdom, needs to advise with any of his creatures, or can be at a loss for any expedient to accomplish his ends ; or that he, who is both truth and holiness itself, should ever send a lying spirit among his prophets, which would be to confound all inspiration, and to make the imputation of error redound upon himself.

(a) Upon the whole, then, we cannot but infer, that the speech of Micaiah was no more than a parabolical representation of a certain event, which not long after came to pass ; that several of the circumstances which are thrown into it, are in a great measure ornamental, and designed only to illustrate the narration ; and that therefore they are not to be taken in a literal sense, but in such a manner as other parables are, where the end and design of the speaker is chiefly to be considered ; which, in Micaiah's case, was to show the reason why so many of the prophets declared what was false upon this occasion, even because they were moved, not by the Spirit of truth, but that of adulation, [and to make on the minds of his hearers, that deep and vivid impression, which, in poetical description, corporeal images can alone produce.]

The prophets indeed, both in their parabolical speeches and symbolical actions, are to be considered as persons of a singular character. For as we find (b) one of them tearing his own garment to pieces, to signify to Jeroboam the alienation of the major part of the kingdom from the house of Solomon ; so here we have another desiring his companion (for so what we render neighbour signifies) to give him a wound, (c) that thereby he might have the better opportunity of reproving Ahab for his ill-timed clemency to Benhadad.

The princes of the East were very difficult of access ; and in the court of Ahab, in particular, the character of a prophet was held in so great detestation, that some expedient was to be found out, to gain him admittance to the king's presence, and an opportunity to speak to him in the manner he designed. After so great a victory as Ahab had lately won by the valour of his men, it may be presumed, that the name of a soldier was become in high esteem ; and therefore to personate a soldier, and a wounded soldier likewise, who might more engage the king's pity and attention, the prophet intreats his fellow-collegiate (having first told him his intent) to give him a slight cut with a sword, or some other instrument, that thereby he might be enabled to act his part better.

To desire to have his own flesh slashed and cut, was, in appearance, a request so frantic, that justly might his brother prophet have denied him that courtesy, had he not been satisfied that the request came from God : But herein lay the great fault of the recusant ; though he knew the authority of God's commands, and that this was the very thing which he enjoined, yet, out of an indiscreet pity and compassion to his brother, he refused to comply. (d) Had he been a stranger indeed to the several methods of Divine prophecy, he might have excused himself with a better grace ; but as he was equally a prophet, bred up in the same school with the other, had been informed by the other of his whole design, and well understood the weight of these words, (e) " I command thee in the name of the Lord," he was utterly inexcusable ; because disobedience to a Divine command, and especially when delivered by a prophet, was, (f) by the construction of the law, held capital.

Now there were two ways (according to the Jewish doctors) wherein the prophets of

(a) *Le Clerc's Commentary.*
Annotations.

(b) 1 Kings xi. 30, 31.
(c) 1 Kings xx. 35.

(d) *Pool's*

(e) Deut. xviii. 19.

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old were punished for their offences in their office. Those (a) who prophesied in the name of idols, or prophesied falsehoods in God's name, were put to death by the judges; but those who either concealed or rejected a true prophecy, were to die by the hand of God. And in the case now before us, the Divine justice might be more disposed to mark what was done amiss; for this reason (among others to us unknown) that, by the severity of this punishment of a prophet's disobedience, proceeding from pity to his brother prophet, he might teach Ahab the greatness of his sin, in sparing him, (through a foolish generosity or compassion) whom, by the laws of religion, and justice, and prudence, and self-preservation, he should have been cut off; and consequently what punishment he might reasonably expect for his disobedience.

In the account which the scripture gives us of Jehoshaphat's reformation, it is said, that he not only (b) "took away the high places and groves, but sent to his princes to teach the cities of Judah, and with them sent Levites, who had the book of the law with them, and went through all the cities of Judah, teaching the people:" But what the proper business of these princes, in their circuit round the kingdom, was, is a matter of some dispute among the learned. Grotius (c) is of opinion, that their commission extended to the instruction of the people, which, in cases extraordinary, is every one's business, and could never be done with more probability of success than by persons who were of the king's council, and invested with his authority. There is reason to think, however, that they did not act in the very same capacity with the priests and Levites that attended them; but that, (d) as judges and justices of peace among us, teach and instruct the people in the laws of the land, when they deliver their charges from the bench; so these great men, in the king's name, did only admonish and require the people to observe the laws of God, which were the municipal laws of the land, and left the particular explication and enforcement of them to those of the sacred order who went along with them; supporting them, in the mean time, in the execution of their office, and obliging the people to receive them with respect, to hear them with attention, and to practise what they taught them.

However this be, it is obvious from the sense of the words, that in those days there was a great (e) "famine in the land, (as the prophet expresses it) not a famine of bread, or a thirst of water, but of hearing the words of the Lord." There were then no such public synagogues and public teachers as were afterwards instituted in the kingdom, for the instruction of the people in the sense of the law; for then there would have been no occasion for these commissioners and Levites to have gone about throughout all the cities of Judah; and into such a wretched state of ignorance was the generality of the people fallen, that there was scarce one copy of the law to be found in the hands of any private person in the whole country; for which reason it was thought advisable, and necessary indeed, to carry one with them.

The truth is, the synagogues, whereof we read so much in the acts of our Saviour and his apostles, as places appointed for the public instruction of the people, were not of so early an institution as the times we are now speaking of. (f) They did not obtain universally till after the time of the Maccabees; and it is to no later date than this that the words of St James allude, (g) "Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath-day." Upon the whole, therefore, we may infer, that if proper places for religious instruction were not as yet instituted; if the Levites and others, whose stated business it was to instruct the people, were become grossly negligent in their duty; and the people withal were grown so obstinate in their ignorance, as to want a proper authority to compel them to listen to their instructors;—then was this commission, which Jehoshaphat gave to persons duly

(a) Deut. xviii. 20.
(e) Amos viii. 11.

(b) 2 Chron. xvii. 6.
(f) Calmet's Dictionary under the word *Synagogue*.

(c) In locum.

(d) Pool's Annotations on ver. 7.

(g) Acts xv. 21.

qualified to execute it, far from being needless or supererogant, but such only as became a pious prince, whose chief ambition was, that (a) "the earth should be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."

From 1 Kings
viii. to the end
of 2 Chron.

For this reason no doubt it is, that the sacred historian has remarked, (as a reward of this prince's piety) that (b) "he had not only riches and honours in abundance," but a more numerous people, and a larger military force, (in proportion to his territories) than any of his most powerful predecessors. The whole amount of the particulars indeed is so very great, (c) that some have suspected a mistake in the transcribers; but when it is considered that the dominions of the kingdom of Judah under Jehoshaphat were not confined to the narrow limits of Judah and Benjamin only, but (d) reached into the tribes of Dan, Ephraim, and Simeon; into Arabia, and the country of the Philistines; in a word, from Beersheba to the mountaints of Ephraim one way, and from Jordan to the Mediterranean Sea the other; when it is considered, that this kingdom received a vast accession, when Jeroboam thrust out the priests and Levites from officiating in the service of the Lord, and multitudes of other piously disposed persons followed them from all parts of Israel, when they found that they might be encouraged in worshipping God at Jerusalem; when it is considered, that this country was exceedingly well cultivated, flourishing in commerce, abounding with foreigners, and what a vast increase of inhabitants in any nation may be produced in the space of an hundred years, which was the very period from David; and when it is considered farther, that soldiers in those days were not kept like our standing armies, in constant pay and duty, but only had their names set down in the king's muster-rolls, in order to be summoned to arms whenever there was occasion, and so returned to their families, and followed their usual occupations:—when all this is considered, and put together, I say, we shall not find the number of twelve hundred thousand fighting men (even though they may imply six millions of persons of all ages and conditions) to be so very extravagant; especially when it is remembered, that the city of Thebes alone (as it is reported by (e) Tacitus) furnished no less than seven hundred thousand soldiers; that in ancient Rome, there were once between three and four millions of souls; and that in Grand Cairo (as some travellers report) there is now almost twice that number*.

We have but one seeming paradox more to account for, and that is the fall (f) of the walls of Aphek upon no less than seven and twenty thousand men. But, in answer to this, (g) we are not to suppose that this wall, or castle, or fort (as it may be rendered), fell upon every individual one, much less that it killed every man it fell on: It is sufficient to justify the expression, that it fell upon the main body of these seven and twenty thousand, and that it killed some and maimed others, (for the Scripture does not say that it killed all), as is usual in such cases. Let us suppose, then, that these Syrians, after their defeat on the plains of Aphek, betook themselves to this fenced city, and, despairing of any quarter, mounted the walls, or retired into some castle, with a resolution to defend themselves to the last; and that the Israelitish army coming upon them, plied the walls or the castle on every side so warmly with their batteries, that down they came at once, and killing some, wounding others, and making the rest disperse for fear, did all the execution that the text intends. [Or, which is infinitely more probable, the walls of the city, and great part of the city itself, may have been overthrown by an earthquake, and vast multitudes of men have perished in the ruins.]

And indeed, if any time was proper for God's Almighty arm to interpose, (h) it was

(a) Isaiah xi. 9.

(b) 2 Chron. xviii. 1.

(c) *Le Clerc's Commentary* on *ibid* xvii. 14.

(d) *Calmet's* *ibid*.

(e) *Annals*, lib. ii.

meant *Pekin*, the capital of China; but even that city is not supposed to contain above 2,000,000 of inhabitants.]

* [This is a very great mistake, Cairo not being more populous than London. Perhaps the author

(f) 1 Kings xx. 30.
tations in locum.

(g) *Pool's* *Annotations* in locum.
(h) *Ibid*.

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&c. or 4507.
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or 904.

at such a time as this, when these blasphemous people had denied his sovereign power and authority in the government of the world, and thereby in some measure obliged him, in vindication of his own honour, to give them a full demonstration of it, and to shew that he was the (a) God of the plains as well as of the mountains; that he could as effectually destroy them in strong-holds as in the open field, and make the very walls, wherein they trusted for defence, the instruments of their ruin.

DISSERTATION II.

OF THE TRANSLATION OF ENOCH AND ELIJAH.

OF all the events recorded in Scripture, we meet with none that requires our attention more than the translation of the patriarch Enoch, in the times before the flood, and the assumption of the prophet Elijah under the dispensation of the law: For, whether Moses, the great minister of that dispensation, was in like manner exempted from the common fate of mortals, is a matter wherein commentators are not so well agreed. The account of Elijah's translation is so express and circumstantiated, that no question can be made of its reality; but the ambiguity of the words wherein the sacred historian has related the assumption of Enoch, has induced several to think, that though this antediluvian patriarch was highly in favour with God, and for that reason removed from the contagious wickedness which was then overspreading the earth; yet that this removal was effected, not by any miraculous operation of God, but merely by his undergoing a natural death.

The words wherein Moses has recorded this transaction are very few, and these of uncertain signification. (b) "Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him." Now it is plain, from several passages in Scripture, not only that the word which we render "God took him," is set to signify our common death, as in the case of Elijah himself, when, under the juniper-tree, he prays that God would (c) "take away his life," because he was not "better than his fathers;" and in that of holy Job, when he tells us, that he did not know how soon (d) "his Maker might take him away;" but that the other expression, "he was not," is frequently used in the same sense, as is evident from the lamentation which both Jacob and his son Reuben made for the supposed loss of Joseph: (e) "Joseph is not, and Simeon is not," says the old man: And (f) "the child is not; and I, whither shall I go?" says the son. So that no argument can be drawn from the terms in the text to countenance a miraculous assumption, more than a natural death, in the prophet Enoch. But this is not all.

The author of the book, entitled The Wisdom of Solomon, is supposed to carry the matter farther, and to declare positively for the death of this patriarch, when he tells us, (g) "that he pleased God and was beloved of him; so that, living among sinners, he was translated; yea, speedily was he taken away, lest wickedness should alter his understanding, and deceit beguile his soul. Being made perfect in a short time, he fulfilled a long time; for his soul pleased the Lord, therefore hastened he to take him away from among the wicked." Where every line in the description (as some imagine) suits

(a) 1 Kings xx. 23.
(e) Gen. xlii. 36.

(b) Gen. v. 24.
(f) Ibid. xxxvii. 30.

(c) 1 Kings xix. 4.
(g) Wisdom iv. 10, &c.

(d) Job xxxii. 22.

exactly with Enoch, and yet the author all along supposes, that the person he is here speaking of died in the same manner as other men do.

From 1 King:
viii. to the end
of 2 Chron.

(a) We acknowledge indeed, that the author of the book of Wisdom, speaking of the hasty and premature death of the righteous, might properly enough allude to what Moses relates concerning the translation of Enoch, who, in comparison of his contemporary patriarchs, lived but a short time; but we have no reason at all to suppose, that he is here directly treating of the death of Enoch; on the contrary, that he is here discoursing of the righteous in general, and vindicating the wisdom and goodness of Providence in taking them sometimes sooner than ordinary out of this wicked world, is evident from the inference wherewith he concludes his discourse: (b) "Thus the righteous, that is dead, shall condemn the ungodly that is living; and youth, that is soon perfected, the old age of the unrighteous: For they shall see the age of the wise, and shall not understand what God, in his council, hath decreed of him, and to what end the Lord hath set him in safety."

We acknowledge again, that, according to the light which the gospel has introduced, for a good man to die at any time (c) is gain, and to be removed from the miseries of this life is much better than the longest continuance in it: (d) But still it must be confessed, that in the first ages of the world, and under a less perfect dispensation, length of days was generally accounted the recompence of virtue; and therefore, if there were nothing extraordinary in the manner of Enoch's departure, the other patriarchs, who so far exceeded him in years, seem to have been more immediately under the Divine favour than he who, though more remarkable than any for his piety and goodness, fell under the lot and condemnation of the wicked, as being not permitted (e) "to live out half his days."

We acknowledge, once more, that the words of Moses do not necessarily imply any miraculous assumption of a living man into heaven, or any other place unknown and unaccessible to mortals: But still, if we will but compare what he says of Enoch with what he relates of the other patriarchs, we shall soon perceive that his purpose was to distinguish between their manner of leaving the world and his. For whereas it is said of all the preceding patriarchs, that they lived to such and such a number of years, and (f) "begat sons and daughters, and so died;" of Enoch it is said, that (g) "he lived sixty and five years, and begat Methuselah; that after he begat Methuselah he lived three hundred years, and begat sons and daughters;" but then, instead of "he died," the author's words are, "he walked with God, and was not, for God took him:" Where he first takes notice of his good and pious life, which made him so acceptable to God, and then of his translation, God took him; but lest there should be any ambiguity in that expression, he adds, and he was not, or appeared no more in the world; whereby he intimates that he still lives, and subsists in some other place.

The truth is, these expressions in the text (when rightly understood) do confirm rather than invalidate the doctrine of Enoch's translation: but, to put the matter beyond all dispute, we have the authority of an apostle, enumerating the actions of the worthies of old, and telling us of this patriarch in particular, that (h) "by faith he was translated, that he should not see death, and was not found, because God had translated him: for, before this translation, he had this testimony, that he pleased God:" where the author to the Hebrews takes care, by repeating the word three times, to prevent our mistaking his meaning; and, by telling us, that the patriarch was not found, he plainly alludes to what the sons of the prophets did when Elijah was taken away, i. e. sent (i) fifty men in quest of him, but found him not; and consequently not obscurely

(a) *Calmet's Dissert. sur le Patriarche Henoch.*
(d) *Saurin's Dissert. sur l'Enlevement d'Enoch.*
(g) Ver. 21, &c.

(h) Heb. xi. 5.

(b) Wisd. iv. 16, 17.

(e) Psal. lv. 23.
(i) 2 Kings ii. 16.

(c) Phil. i. 21, 22.

(f) Gen. v. 5, &c.

From 1 Kings
viii. to the end
of 2 Chron.

intimates, that this transport of the patriarch was of the same nature with what happened to the prophet so many years after; that they were both the effect of the Divine favour to them; both the reward of their services upon earth, and both a remove to some certain place that is beyond the reach of the knowledge of man.

In what part of the world this place is, we should not be too inquisitive, much less too positive, because we have no foundation but conjectures to go upon. (a) St Austin, who seems to be more reserved in other abstruse questions, is very peremptory in this,—That Enoch and Elijah were translated into that † terrestrial paradise, where Adam and Eve lived in their state of innocence; that there they are nourished by the fruit of the tree of life, which gives them a power of subsisting for ever, without submitting to the necessity of death; that there they enjoy all the blessings and privileges that our first parents had before their transgression; and, among other things, an exemption from sinning by the supernatural grace of God. But then the question is, where we are to place this terrestrial paradise, since there is scarce one region in the world that one author or other has not made choice of for its situation; and since, by the violent concussions which happened at Noah's flood, the face of nature had been so changed, that those very places which, according to their description in Scripture, seem once to bid fairest for it, are now debased to such a degree, as little to deserve the appellation "of the gardens of pleasure," much less the "abodes of the blessed."

(b) The word *Schamajim*, which we render *heaven*, is supposed by several, both Jewish and Christian doctors, to be the upper part of the air, where the spirits of just men departed, together with these two translated persons, live in a state of sincere but imperfect bliss, until the general resurrection: but this, in our opinion, is placing the seats of the blessed too near the confines (c) of the prince of the power of that element, and in danger of being disturbed by some incursions from his quarters; and therefore (if we might be indulged a farther conjecture) (d) we should rather chuse to place them beyond the circumference of the solar system, where there are immense spaces, neither obstructed by the motion of any planets, nor obnoxious to the changes of their atmospheres, because nothing is there but pure ether. But how our corporeal part shall be enabled to live there, and to live to all eternity, we shall then come to understand, when by experience we shall know what that change is, which the body undergoes, when it puts on immortality. In the mean time, as God is omnipotent, nothing can hinder him from making what changes he pleases in our bodies, and from preserving them eternally in that state.

This we may call the celestial paradise, into which our blessed Saviour promised the penitent thief upon the cross, a joyful admittance; and having taken him with him, and reposed his soul in this mansion of rest and happiness, proceeded in his ascent beyond the orbits of the most distant stars, and made his entrance into the highest heavens, which are the residence of God himself; and into which (as others imagine) this patriarch and prophet were, upon their translation, carried.

(e) "I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago," says St Paul, speaking of himself, though his modesty made him conceal it, " (whether in the body, I cannot tell, or whether out of the body, I cannot tell, God knoweth) such an one caught up to the third heaven; and I knew such a man (whether in the body, or out of the body, God

(a) Contra *Julian*, lib. vi. c. 30.

† Whether the Mahometans embrace the same opinion it is a little uncertain; but they have a tradition among them, of one Kheder, or Khizin, who had the good fortune to find the fountain of life, whereof he drank plentifully, and so became immortal. This Kheder, whose name signifies *verdant* or *ever flourishing*, according to them is the same with Elijah, who

lives in a place of retirement, in a delicious garden, where the fountain of life runs, and the tree of life, which preserves his immortality, grows. *Calmet's Dictionary*, under the word *Elijah*.

(b) *Le Clerc's Commentary* on 2 Kings ii 11.

(c) Ephes. ii. 2.

(e) 2 Cor. xii. 2, &c.

(d) *Le Clerc*, *ibid*.

knoweth) how that he was caught up into paradise, and heard things unspeakable, which it is not possible for man to utter:" And if " St Paul was caught up into the third heaven," even while he continued in this mortal state, why may we not suppose that Enoch and Elijah were at once translated into the same place? The probable design of God's vouchsafing the apostle this vision of heaven, was to shew him what his final reward would be, and consequently, for the crown of joy that was set before him, to make him (a) " glory in the cross of Christ, (b) in tribulation, in distress, in persecution;" and how reasonable it is to believe that these two worthies, who in their several generations had (c) " fought the good fight, and finished their course, and kept the faith," should, upon the peculiar favour of their assumption into heaven, be admitted to a nearer participation of the beatific vision, as an ample reward for the fatigues of their warfare?

From 1 King,
viii. to the end
of 2 Chron.

At our Saviour's transfiguration upon the Mount, we find one of these sent to him (as we may presume) upon some important message, appearing in a bright and glorious form, and (as if he were admitted to the counsels of heaven) (d) " talking with him of his decease, which he was to accomplish at Jerusalem:" And therefore we can hardly think that his abode could be at any wide distance from the throne of God's presence, who, in conjunction with his faithful servant and lawgiver, Moses, was deputed to go on an embassy to his (e) beloved Son. But in this point we ought to repress our curiosity, and, in the sense of (f) Theodoret, content ourselves with what God has been pleased to reveal in Scripture, without inquiring too curiously into what he hath thought fit to conceal.

In what manner Enoch was translated into heaven we have not the least intimation, nor is the account of Elijah's ascension to be taken in a literal sense; since a fiery chariot and horses would not have been a vehicle so proper for a nature as yet not impregnated with immortality. The notion of those who, upon this occasion, make angels assume the form of the chariot and horses, is not so incongruous, because we need not doubt but that by the Divine permission they can transform themselves into any shape. They are supposed to have frequently appeared in the figure of flying oxen, for which reason they have obtained the name of *cherub*, or *cherubim*; and with the same facility they might at this time have put on the appearance of horses: but, in points not so clearly expressed, we are to resolve God's method of acting by those that are analogous, and yet more plain.

Now the only ascension that we read of besides these, is that of our blessed Saviour; and the manner in which he is said to have been carried up, was by the subvention of a cloud, which raised him from the ground, and, mounting with him gradually, (g) " carried him out of the apostles sight:" and in like manner, we may suppose, that the translation of these two was performed, viz. that a bright and radiant cloud (which, as it ascended, might appear like a chariot and horses) raised them from the earth, and leaving this little globe behind, wafted them into the seats of the blessed. Only we must observe, that Christ's body was at this time invested with the powers of spirituality, and therefore capable of ascending without any vehicle; whereas theirs were retarded with a load of matter: * And therefore it is reasonable to think, that by the ministry of angels, or rather by the power of God, the cloud which carried them up was condensed to a more than common consistency, and that the whirlwind which

(a) Gal. vi. 14.

(c) 2 Tim. iv. 7.

(e) Ver. 35.

(g) Acts i. 9.

(b) Rom. viii. 35.

(d) Luke ix. 31.

(f) *Quæst.* 45. in Genes.

we are sure he will change the righteous who shall be alive at our Lord's coming to judgment; and it is the more extraordinary that our author should have made such an objection as this, that he himself completely obviates it in the very next paragraph.]

* [This is very absurd; since God could change them in an instant, in the twinkling of an eye, as

A. M. 3001, might be raised for this purpose, helped to accelerate its motion, and expedite their ascent.
&c or 4507.
Ant Chris.
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"But since (a) 'flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, neither doth corruption inherit incorruption;' the question is, how these persons were all on a sudden (b) 'made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light?' "Behold, I shew you a mystery," says St Paul, speaking of those who shall be alive at our Saviour's second advent; "we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump;" and therefore the same Almighty power, which, at the sounding of the last trump, will make "our corruptible natures put on incorruption, and our mortal put on immortality," did, no doubt, in their passage, change their terrestrial into celestial bodies, and thereby convey into them such faculties as were requisite for the enjoyment of the place whereunto it was conducting them.

What particular services Enoch had done God, for which he vouchsafed him this favour extraordinary, and an exemption from mortality, the Scripture has nowhere specified. It tells us only, that "he walked with God;" but then, considering that (if not then, at least in a short time) (c) "all flesh had corrupted their ways," and that "when God saw the wickedness of the earth, it repented him that he had made man;" we may suppose, that this good and pious patriarch took care not only of his conduct, but set himself in opposition likewise to the violence, and other kinds of iniquity, which began then to prevail in most places, and that, in short, he was (as the tradition goes) a preacher of righteousness, in which office Noah is said to have succeeded him. For that he was a preacher of righteousness is manifest from that commination of his, which St Jude (from some ancient record or other) brings him in making to the antediluvian world: (d) "Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them, of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed, and of all the hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him."

And in like manner, it is very evident, that Elijah was a zealous advocate for God, and a strenuous opposer of idolatry, an implacable enemy to Baal's priests, an undaunted reprover of the wickedness of princes, and a severe inflicter of the Divine vengeance upon all the children of disobedience: And therefore, we may presume, that God designed his exaltation, not only as a recompence for his past services, which were great, but as an encouragement likewise to other remaining prophets, "to be strong in the Lord;" to bear witness boldly against the corruption of the age wherein they lived; and in the execution of their office to fear the face of no man.

The corruption of the age indeed, both in the times of Enoch and Elijah, was become so great and general, that the belief of a future state (we may well suppose) was in a manner quite extinct among them; and therefore God might think it expedient, at these two periods of time, to give the world a sensible proof of it, if not to convince the unbelieving part, at least to excite in the hearts of the faithful, under all their afflictions and persecutions for righteousness sake, refreshing hopes and expectations of a recompence to be made them in due time. Nor can we think but that, in these instances, God might have a prospect to a greater event, and by the assumption of his two faithful servants, intend to typify the ascension of his Son, who was to "destroy death, and open the kingdom of heaven to all believers;" that thereby he might make the testimony of his apostles concerning this fact a thing more credible; and give all good Christians a more solid comfort and consolation in those words of St Paul, (e) "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who

(a) 1 Cor. xv. 50.
(e) Rom. viii. 33, 34.

(b) Colos. i. 12.

(c) Gen. vi. 6. 12.

(d) Jude ver. 14, 15.

is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died; yea, rather that is risen again, who is even at the right-hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us?" From 1 Kings viii. to the end of 2 Chron.

The testimony of the angels concerning our blessed Saviour is,—(a) "This same Jesus, who is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come, in like manner, as ye have seen him go into heaven:" But before this his second coming, it is an opinion that has prevailed much among the ancient fathers, (b) that God in his great mercy will send Enoch and Elijah to oppose the proceedings of Antichrist, to refute his doctrines, and to fortify the righteous against his threats and cruelties; but that, by the management of this their adversary, they shall be put to death, though in a short time raised again to everlasting life and glory. The whole of this notion is founded upon a very abstruse passage in St John's Revelation, concerning the two witnesses, which are variously interpreted. For, besides Enoch and Elijah (as we said before), some apply them to the law and the prophets, others to the Old and New Testament, and others again (especially those who favour the millenary scheme, to our Saviour Christ, and his forerunner John the Baptist. But as every one is left to his liberty to chuse what part he pleases in such problems as these, we shall (without pretending to determine any thing ourselves) leave the passage (which in a great measure we account inexplicable) to the examination of the more learned and sagacious.—(c) "I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophecy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth. These are the two olive-trees, and the two candlesticks, standing before the God of the earth; and if a man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies.—They have power to shut heaven, that it rain not, in the days of their prophecy, and have power over waters, to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will. And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast, that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit, shall make war against them, and overcome them, and kill them, and their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which is spiritually called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.—Their bodies shall lie three days and an half without being buried, and the people shall rejoice, and make merry, because of their death; but, after three days and an half, the spirit of life from God shall enter into them, and they shall stand on their feet, and great fear shall fall upon them that see them."

APPENDIX TO DISSERTATION II.

[THIS, on the whole, is an ingenious and pious Dissertation; but it is not unexceptionable. All attempts to ascertain the *precise place* to which Enoch and Elijah were

(a) Acts i. 11.

(b) Calmet's Dissert. sur le Patriarch Henoch, &c.

(c) Revel. xi. 3, &c. The learned Calmet (from whom in a great measure I have extracted this dissertation) concludes his discourse in such words as these.—1. That though we cannot infer from the strict words of Moses, that Enoch was translated alive into another world, and is still living; yet nevertheless ought the authorities of St Paul, and the tradition of the church, to prevail with us to esteem this opinion as a matter of faith. 2. Although the fathers and interpreters seem to differ about the place into which Enoch was translated, yet, if we examine carefully

their different opinions, the greatest part of them may be reduced to a declaration of his being in paradise, which some place on the earth and others in heaven. And, 3. That whatever liberty the church may allow interpreters, of putting a sense on the passage quoted out of the Revelations, which speaks of the coming of two witnesses that are to appear in the latter ages; it must be agreed, that the opinion, which explains it of the return of Enoch and Elijah upon the earth, is much preferable to any other, on account of its antiquity, its intrinsic justness, and the number of authors who maintain it.

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or 904.

translated, must be vain, if not presumptuous; for we know not the precise *place* to which the faithful shall be translated after the general judgment at the end of the world. We know indeed, that in the house of our Heavenly Father there are many mansions, and that among these mansions places are prepared, for all who shall have loved and feared him, suitable to the attainments that they have made to render themselves "meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light;" we know likewise, that the glory and happiness, to be enjoyed in even the lowest of these places, surpass every thing of the kind, which we can at present conceive; but this is all that we know, or ever can know of the subject, in our present state of existence; and it is sufficient for those who ought to live by faith and not by sight.

It is indeed difficult to suppose that Enoch and Elijah in their glorified *bodies* are now in the place of the *disembodied* spirits of the faithful departed; and all attempts to ascertain where even that place is, have been equally vain with those which have been made to ascertain the situation of the regions of the blessed. That the faithful departed are not in the same state in which they shall be placed after the resurrection of the dead, is clearly the doctrine of Scripture; but whilst some have placed their intermediate place in the upper regions of the air, and others beyond the utmost limits of the solar system, the ancient fathers in general, and Bishop Horsley, with many other moderns of equal learning, have supposed that the intermediate state of departed souls is in a great cavity in the centre of the earth. All these opinions are equally groundless; or if there be any difference, in this respect, among them, the last is the most groundless of the three; for we have all the evidence which can be given us by that philosophy, of which the illustrious prelate was a great master, that the centre of the earth consists not only of matter solid, but of matter even more dense than any thing with which we are acquainted, except perhaps some of the metals.

But wherever the souls departed may be, we are sure that they are, to use Bishop Horsley's words, "in a place of safe keeping under the shadow of God's right hand;" but we can hardly suppose that Enoch and Elijah are with them. This indeed seems to have been the general opinion of the ancients, though others placed these prophets in the terrestrial paradise. The terrestrial paradise was perhaps preserved till the general deluge; but in that dreadful convulsion of nature it must have been swept from the face of the earth; and therefore the patriarch and prophet cannot be there now. The most probable opinion certainly would be, that they are in that heaven, to which all the blessed shall be translated after the judgment of the great day; but this opinion seems to be confuted by our Saviour himself, when he told Nicodemus (*a*) that "no man had then ascended up into *heaven*, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man," who, when speaking on earth, "was in heaven." To me these words seem to indicate that there is some mansion in heaven, into which no man—not even Enoch or Elias—had then been admitted, but to which the blessed may be admitted afterwards. That place, it is likewise evident, is not what our Lord calls *paradise* in his promise to the penitent thief on the cross, and in which we have reason to believe that the souls of the faithful repose, in the felicity of well assured hope, till the day of the general resurrection; for our Lord's human nature—even his soul—was not in *heaven* till after he rose from the dead. This seems evident from his words to Mary Magdalene (*b*)—"Touch me not, for I *am not yet ascended to my father*; but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God." His soul therefore had not been in heaven during the period that elapsed between his death and resurrection, nor, of course, had the penitent thief's, nor are those souls of the faithful, which are now in *paradise*; but Enoch and Elijah went not to *paradise*, for of the latter it is expressly said, that "he went up by a whirlwind into *heaven*," though

(*a*) John iii. 13.

(*b*) Ibid. xx. 17.

certainly not into the *highest* heaven, nor probably even to that heaven, to which he shall be admitted at the end of this world. We shall have a better opportunity, when we come to the History of the New Testament, to inquire into what is meant by the many mansions of our Heavenly Father's House; but we may, I think, take it for granted, that the patriarch and prophet were translated into one of these, quite different from the paradise of disembodied spirits, and yet inferior to that, into which they shall be received at the judgment of the great day; for there is nothing in Scripture that can lead us to suppose that they shall be exempted from appearing with the rest of the human race "before the judgment-seat of Christ, when every man shall receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether good or bad."

From 1 Kings
viii. to the end
of 2 Chron.

That Enoch and Elijah were both men of most exemplary faith, piety, and virtue, and eminent ministers of God in their respective generations, is unquestionable; but our author uses very improper language, though I doubt not but his meaning was harmless, when he speaks of *particular services rendered by them to God, for which* he vouchsafed them exemption from mortality. Exemption from mortality, as we have already seen, was not the wages of any *service* which could have been rendered, even in paradise, by man to his Maker. It was then as it is now, the *gift* of God; but it was then suspended on man's observance of a positive command, and is now freely bestowed on all—Enoch and Elijah not excepted—"through Jesus Christ our Lord," who is equally the resurrection and the life—the resurrection of the body and the uninterrupted life of the soul. Enoch and Elijah were indeed exempted from that temporary death of the body, which in the New Testament is so far from being considered as any thing really dreadful, that it is compared to a state of placid sleep. The *pain* of dying has in its prospect something indeed frightful; but it is hardly to be supposed that the prophet and patriarch were exempted from this common lot of humanity merely in reward of the integrity of their conduct in the stations in which they had been respectively placed: for even they, with all their piety, and virtue, and zeal, were but unprofitable servants to God, because they had done only that which it was their duty to do, and because man cannot be profitable to his Maker.

Their translation therefore into heaven, without previously tasting death, was undoubtedly to serve some great purpose in that astonishing scheme of redemption, which was gradually unfolded from the fall of man until it was completed by the death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ; and part at least of that purpose is now clearly seen. In the ages of Enoch and Elijah, the people around them were sunk into the lowest state of irreligion and vice. These two faithful ministers of God had done every thing in their power, and under the influence of the Holy Spirit, as well by their example as by their precepts, to bring them back to their duty; they had warned them of "the judgments to be speedily executed upon them for all their ungodly deeds, which they had ungodly committed, and for all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners had spoken" against their Maker and his ministers; and Elijah had been himself the instrument of executing some of those judgments on Ahab and the prophets of Baal. But, though piety and virtue were generally rewarded, and profaneness, idolatry, and vice, punished even in this world—*probably* during the eras of both these prophets, but *certainly* in Israel during the era of Elijah; and though God was then not slack, in any sense of the word, "concerning either his promises or his threatenings," all the promises and threatenings of the prophets, and all the judgments, which had actually come on the people, were despised. In the days of Enoch, the obscure promise made to Adam of redemption, from that death which he had brought on himself and his posterity, appears to have been either not generally understood, or to have been generally forgotten. In the age of Ahab and Elijah, great part of the Hebrew Scriptures was not written; and it may be reasonably doubted whether any part of those Scriptures was ever re-

A. M. 3001,
&c. or 4507.
Ant. Chris.
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or 904.

ceived as canonical in the kingdom of Israel founded by Jeroboam, but the five books of Moses, and perhaps the book of Joshua. These books seem not to have had their due influence in that kingdom at any time, from the period of its revolt from the house of David, till its final and complete destruction by the Assyrian monarch; but it is very evident that during the idolatrous reigns of Ahab and his sons, the law of Moses was totally disregarded, except by a comparatively very small number. It is likewise to be remembered, that the sanctions of the Mosaic law were not spiritual but temporal, and that those, who knew not how death had come into the world, and were ignorant of the meaning of the promises made to Adam, to Noah, to Abraham, and to Isaac, and Jacob—promises which the worldly policy of the idolatrous kings and priests of Israel would not encourage the people to study—could hardly derive from their religion any steady conviction of a future state of retribution. It seems to have been therefore necessary, at both these periods, to afford the people a *sensible* proof, that there is verily a reward for the righteous in a state different from the present; and that proof was exhibited to them by the translation of Enoch and Elijah.

“The translation of Enoch, says Bishop Law (a), must have made the world about him sensible of the good Providence of God, inspecting and rewarding his faithful servants; and one would think it should have induced them to look up to a better state than the present, where all such might hope at length to see and enjoy their Maker. It was a lively and affecting instance of what man might have enjoyed had he kept his original innocence; as well as an earnest of the promised victory over the evil one, and that mankind were not to be left entirely in their present state, but, at some time or other, to be restored to the favour of their Maker, and behold his presence in bliss and immortality;” and surely the translation of Elijah should have had an equally salutary effect on the Israelites. It should have convinced their idolatrous sovereign with his profane priests and false prophets, that “there is verily a reward for the righteous, and a God of gods that judgeth the earth;” and it ought to have drawn the attention of the people, as it probably did draw the attention of many of them, to the import of those promises which were made to their father Abraham, that in his seed should all the nations of the earth be blessed.]

(a) *Considerations on the Theory of Religion*, part ii.

CHAPTER III.

FROM THE SIEGE OF SAMARIA, BY BENHADAD, TO THE DEATH OF UZZIAH KING OF JUDAH.

THE HISTORY.

NOTWITHSTANDING the great service which the prophet Elisha had done Benhadad king of Syria, in curing Naaman the general of his forces of a confirmed leprosy, he still continued his enmity against Israel. Having raised an army with a purpose to besiege Samaria, he opened the campaign with stratagems of war; and, in hopes of surprising Jehoram's troops, laid here and there some ambuscades, which Elisha, by his spirit of prophecy, found out, and all along gave the king of Israel a timely intelligence of them. Benhadad at first suspected that his counsels were betrayed; but when he was informed by † one of his officers that Elisha (who was then at Dothan, a small city in the half-tribe of Manasseh, and not far from Samaria) must certainly have been at the bottom of all this, he sent a strong detachment to seize him, and invested the city that night.

From 1 Kings viii. to the end of 2 Chron.

On the morrow, when Elisha's servant saw the enemy surrounding the town, and knew of no forces to oppose them, †² he expressed his fear and concern to his master; but, upon his master's prayer, * his eyes were opened, and he beheld a multitude of

† It is not to be doubted but that Naaman, upon his return from Samaria, spread the fame of Elisha so much in the court of Syria, that some of the great men there might have the curiosity to make a farther enquiry concerning him; and being informed by several of his miraculous works, they might thence conclude, that he could tell the greatest secrets, as well as perform such wonders as were related of him; and that therefore, in all probability, he was the person who gave the king of Israel intelligence of all the schemes that had been contrived to entrap him. *Patrick's Commentary*.

†² This young man, it is supposable, had been but a little while with his master, no longer than since Gehazi's dismissal, and therefore perhaps had not yet seen any great experiments of his power to work miracles; or, if he had, the great and imminent danger he thought his master in (for, in all probability, he had learnt from the people of the town, that this vast body of men were come to apprehend him only),

might well be allowed to raise his fear, and shake his faith. *Pool's Annotations*.

* It must be allowed that angels, whether they be purely spiritual, or (as others think) clothed with some material form, cannot be seen by mortal eyes; and therefore, as Elisha himself, without a peculiar vouchsafement of God, could not discern the heavenly host which at this time encamped about him; so he requests of God, that, for the removal of his fears, and the confirmation of his faith, his servant might be indulged the same privilege: Nor does it seem improbable, that, from such historical facts as these, which have descended by tradition, that notion among the Greeks, of a certain mist which intercepts the sight of their gods from the ken of human eyes, might at first borrow its original. To this purpose we may observe, that Homer makes Minerva bespeak Diomedes fighting against the Trojans, who were assisted by some other gods.

A. M. 3001, horses and fiery chariots standing in array, and prepared to protect them; while (as his master continued his prayer) the men that beleagured the town were struck with blindness; so that, by the prophet's persuading them that they were out of their way, and had mistaken the place they were bound to, they were led, in this bewildered condition, into the very midst of Samaria; where, at the prophet's request, God opened their eyes again to shew them the danger they were in.

Jehoram, finding so great a number of the enemy lying at his mercy, would have gladly put them to the sword; but Elisha by all means dissuaded him from it, alleging, that as he would scarce be so cruel as to kill in cold blood, even-prisoners that were taken in war, much less should he touch those who were brought into his hands by the Providence of God, and therefore he rather advised him * to treat them with all manner of civility, and let them go; which accordingly the king did.

But, || how signal soever this piece of service and generosity to Benhadad was, it did not prevail with him to relinquish the old grudge and malice which he had conceived against Israel; for, not long after, he laid close siege to Samaria, and reduced the city to such distress, that an ass's head was sold *2 for fourscore pieces of silver, and ‡ three

Ἄχλυν δ' αὖ τοι ἀπ' ὀφθαλμῶν ἔλον, ἢ πρὶν ἐπ' ἔην,
Ὅφ' εὖ γινώσκεις, ἢ μὲν θεόν, ἢ δὲ καὶ ἄνδρα.

Iliad v.

Which Virgil has imitated, in making Venus speak thus:

Aspice: namque omnem, quæ nunc obducta tuenti
Mortales hebetat visus tibi, et humida circum
Caligat, nubem eripiam: &c. Aeneid 2.

Le Clerc's Commentary.

* Though, according to the rigour of the laws of arms, a conqueror is at liberty to put, whatever enemies fall into his hands, if he pleases, to the sword; yet the laws of humanity and compassion, of honour and good nature, should always restrain us from treating, with the utmost severity, such as surrender themselves and implore our mercy; for, so says the tragedian, "Quod non vetat lex, hoc vetat fieri pudor." *Senec.* Troad. So the philosopher, "Æqui bonique natura parcere etiam captivis jubet." *Senec. de Clement. lib. i. c. 18.* and so the divine, "Hostem pugnantem necessitas perimat, non voluntas. Sicut bellanti et resistenti violentia redditur, ita victo et capto misericordia jam debetur." *Aug. ad Bonifac. ep. i.* But, besides the humanity and charity of the thing, there was this prudence and policy in the kind treatment of the Syrians, that, by this means, their hearts might be mollified towards the Israelites, that, upon their return, they might become, as it were, so many preachers of the power and greatness of the God of Israel, and not only be afraid themselves, but dissuade others likewise from opposing a people that had so invincible a protector. *Calmet's Commentary*, and *Pool's Annotations*.

|| Several heathens have observed, that "injuries are more gloriously overcome by benefits, than required by pertinacious and mutual hatred;" but the sense of benefits in bad natures does not last long: for no sooner do we read of the kind treatment which the Syrians received, 2 Kings vi. 23. but it immediately follows, that the king of Syria "gathered all his host, and went up and besieged Samaria;" which does not

so well agree with what is said in the preceding verse, viz. that "the bands of the Syrians came no more into the land of Israel." But now, as we can hardly think, that any author whatever would contradict himself in the same breath, so we may suppose, either that the Syrians quite retreated for this time, and laid aside all thoughts of war, though afterwards they altered their minds, and broke out again into hostilities; or (what seems more plain) that their bands made no more incursions and inroads, but that they were resolved to fall upon the Israelites at once, with a regular and formed army, and to besiege Samaria. For in this sense Josephus takes it, when he tells us, that, after this time, "Adad" (for so he calls Benhadad) "never entered into any underhand practice against the king of Israel, but resolved to make open war upon him, in confidence of his greater strength and numbers." *Jewish Antiq. lib. ix. c. 2.*

*2 If we reckon these pieces of silver, or shekels, at fifteen pence a-piece, they come to five pounds Sterling,—a vast price for that which had on it so little meat, and that unclean according to the law, Lev. xi. 26. In times of famine, however, and extreme necessity, the Jews themselves were absolved from the observation of the law; nor do there want instances in history, where other people, upon the same occasion, have been reduced to the like distress, if what Plutarch (in the life of Artaxerxes) tells us be true, viz. that, in that prince's war with the Caducii, an ass's head could scarce have been purchased at the price of sixty drams, i. e. two pounds and five shillings of our money. *Calmet's Commentary*, and *Prideaux's Connection*, in the Preface.

‡ What we in this place call *pulse*, our translation has rendered *doves dung*; but interpreters have been at a great loss to devise upon what account the inhabitants of Samaria should be obliged to buy so small a quantity of it (for a cab was the least measure the Jews had for dry things) at so dear a rate. For food, for salt, for firing, for dunging their lands within the walls, several interpreters have severally applied it: but, upon a small examination, it will appear, that

quarters of a pint of pulse for five. Nay, to that extremity was the famine come, that even mothers were constrained to eat their own children; which when the king understood, † from the information of one who had been constrained to do it, he rent his clothes, and, in a fit of rage, vowed to be revenged of Elisha, whom he took to be the cause of all this calamity; and to this purpose sent an officer to take off his head, whilst himself followed after to see the execution done.

Elisha, by the spirit of prophecy, had notice of this wicked design against his life; and having acquainted †² the company with it, desired them to secure the doors, that the officer might not be admitted until the king came. When the king was come, and the prophet was exhorting him to have a little patience, and God would remove this affliction in due time.—in a raving fit of despair, he replied, “That he would wait God’s leisure no longer, but go and worship his father’s idols, if they peradventure could deliver him in this necessity.” Whereupon the prophet assured him, that if he would stay but four and twenty hours more, he should see such an alteration in Samaria, that †³ a

From 1 Kings
viii. to the end
of 2 Chron

none of these uses could suit with the circumstances of a city so closely besieged as Samaria was. The talmudists suppose, that they have found out the true solution, by translating the term in the original, by *crop of doves*; for they affirm, that several people in Samaria kept many doves to bring them provisions from the country, which were wont to disgorge what they picked up, so that their owners might sell it at a dear rate: but who can imagine that so great a number of doves, as were necessary for this purpose, should be suffered to live in a city so pinched with famine; that doves should be so docile, and well trained up, as to bring to their masters whatever they had ranged for; or, that in a country in a manner covered with the enemy, who had altogether foraged and laid it waste, there should be found any nourishment at all? The learned Bochart therefore has not only solidly confuted these wild opinions, but has likewise farther observed, that the Arabians gave the name of doves dung, or sparrows dung, to two several things: 1st, To a kind of moss that grows on trees or stony ground; and, 2dly, To a sort of pease or pulse which was very common in Judea, as may be seen in 2 Sam. xvii. 28. and therefore he concludes, that the word *Chersonim* may very well denote *vetches* or *pulse*: and, for the confirmation of this, some travellers have told us, that, at Grand Cairo and Damascus, there are magazines where they constantly fry this kind of grain, which those who go on pilgrimage buy and take with them as part of the provision for their journey. *Hieroz*, part ii. lib. i. c. 7. and an *Essay towards a New Translation*.

† The story, as it is represented in Scripture, is very affecting. “And as the king of Israel was passing by upon the wall, there cried a woman unto him, saying, Help, my Lord, O King. And he said, if the Lord do not help thee, whence shall I help thee? Out of the barn-floor, or out of the wine-press? And the king said unto her, what aileth thee? And she answered, this woman said unto me, give thy son, that we may eat him to-day, and we will eat my son to-morrow; so we boiled my son, and did eat him; and I said unto her the next day, give thy son, that we may eat him, and she hath hid her son,” 2 Kings vi. 26, &c. A shocking story this! and a terrible

effect of the Divine vengeance, which Moses had long before told the Israelites would fall upon them, Deut. xxviii. 53. if they rebelled against God; which, at two other times besides this, viz. at the siege of Jerusalem under Nebuchadnezzar, Ezek. v. 10 and at that under Titus the Roman general, came likewise to pass; for therein Josephus gives us a very dolorous account of a lady of distinction, who, out of extremity of hunger, was forced to eat the very child that sucked at her breast. *The Wars of the Jews*, lib. vii. c. 8.

†² The words in the text are, “And Elisha sat in his house, and the elders sat with him,” 2 Kings vi. 32. where, by his house, some interpreters understand the school where the sons of the prophets met to be instructed; and, by the elders, his chief scholars who, under his instruction, applied themselves to the study of Divine things. But as we frequently read in Ezekiel of the elders of Israel sitting before the prophet to hear him, Chap. viii. 1. and xiv. 1. we cannot see why the elders, in this place likewise, may not denote some good and godly men who bore office either in the court, camp, or city, as it seems probable by the prophet’s desiring their help and protection. For though Jehoram himself was a wicked man, and most of his officers might be forward enough to imitate him, yet we are not to doubt but that there were some of them, whom Elisha’s holy life, and glorious miracles, together with the sundry benefits which the public reaped from his ministry, had won over to God and to the true religion; and these were here sitting with him, either to receive comfort and counsel from him in this distressed time, or to solicit him to use his power with God for their relief: which accordingly he did, and, in compliance to their request, not out of any fear of the king’s threats, (from which he was well assured that God would not fail to deliver him) he pronounced the joyful news, which follows in the beginning of the next chapter. *Pool’s Annotations*.

†³ The word *Seah*, which we render *a measure*, was equal to six eabs, and contained (as some think) six quarts, (as others) a peck, and (as others) a peck and two quarts of our measure. The shekel was much about our three shillings; and to have a peck

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or 904.

measure of flour should be sold for a shekel, and two measures of barley for the same price. This a certain lord, (a great favourite of the king's) standing by and hearing, affirmed to be a thing impossible, unless God should rain corn from the clouds; to whom the prophet only made this short answer,—“That himself should see the plenty, but not be permitted to taste of it; which accordingly came to pass.

The people of Samaria, though addicted to idolatry, did nevertheless observe the ceremonial part of the law, and, pursuant to this, had † shut four lepers out of the city, who lay under the walls until they were ready to starve. In this condition these poor creatures, consulting what measures they should best take, resolved at last to try the generosity of the enemy, because, at the worst, they could but die; and accordingly before the break of day went to the camp. When they came thither, to their great surprise they found no living creature, but only horses and asses. The tents were standing, and well provided with riches, and all manner of necessaries, but the men were gone: for having been affrighted with a noise in the air, as of an army in full march, and ready to fall upon them, they supposed that the king of Israel had called to his assistance some foreign powers, († the Hittites or Egyptians) and thereupon leaving the camp, without ever striking their tents, betook themselves to their heels as fast as they could.

The poor lepers, having first satisfied their hunger, and secured some riches to themselves, began to reflect, that while they were thus regaling themselves, and plundering the camp, their countrymen were in danger of starving in the town; and therefore with all possible haste returning to the gate, they gave the porter notice of the enemy's flight, who went immediately and sent an account of it to the king. The king, imagining at first that this had been a stratagem of the Syrians to draw his people out of the town, and so fall upon them, sent out some parties to reconnoitre such places as might be most suspected for ambuscades; but when they returned, they informed him, that they could get no sight of the enemy, only they found the roads strewed with arms and garments, and several bundles of things which they had dropped (as they supposed) to ease themselves in their flight. Upon hearing of this news, the people rush out of the city in great numbers, and bring in provision in such quantities, that corn was sold at the price which Elisha mentioned, and at the time which he foretold: And as the incredulous nobleman who had despised the prophet's prediction, was appointed by the king to guard the gate which led from the city to the camp, the better to prevent disor-

of fine flour for three shillings at other times would not have been so cheap, but, considering the present situation of things, it was wonderfully so. *Le Clerc's* Commentary, and *Pool's* Annotations.

† The Jews are of opinion, that these four lepers were Gehazi and three of his sons. Persons that were leprous indeed, were not permitted to converse with other men, and by the law of Moses, while the Israelites lived in tents, they were to be turned out of the camp, Numb. v. 2, 3. But after that they came to inhabit cities, it may be questioned, whether they treated them with that rigour; since in 2 Kings viii. 4. we find Gehazi holding discourse with the king, (which makes against his being one of the four excluded lepers) and giving him a detail of all Elisha's miracles; but this he might do by talking to him at a proper distance. Lepers indeed were carefully avoided, because their distemper in these hot countries was thought contagious; but in the case before us, these four seem to be excluded, not so much upon the account of their distemper, as because they were useless hands. They could neither fight, nor work in

communion with others: they were only fruges consumere nati, and was therefore no proper persons in a siege. *Patrick's* and *Calmet's* Commentaries.

† The Hittites in particular lived in Arabia Petraea, to the south of Palestine, and in Solomon's time (who had some wives likewise out of their country) held a great commerce with him for horses, 1 Kings x. 29. and xi. 1. But under the name of Hittites, (as elsewhere under the name of Amorites) the sacred penman seems to comprehend all, or any of the people of Canaan. For though the greatest number of that people were destroyed, yet some of them were spared, and many of them (upon Joshua's coming) fled away, some to remote parts, (as that famous and ancient pillar in the coasts of Africk testifies) and others to the countries bordering upon Canaan; where, by reason of the scarcity of inhabitants in those days, finding room enough, they seated themselves, and in process of time growing numerous and powerful, appointed (according to their ancient manner of government) kings to rule over them. *Pool's* Annotations.

ders, the crowd pressed so vehemently upon him, that they trampled him under foot, and killed him before he had an opportunity to taste any part of that great store which he saw was brought to the market.

From 1 King-
viii to the end
of 2 Chron.

After this miraculous raising of the siege of Samaria, Benhadad was deterred from making any farther attempts upon Israel: nor do we hear any more of him in the Sacred History, until Elisha went to Damascus, the capital of Syria, to execute the order of declaring Hazael king, which was originally given to Elijah his predecessor. The king hearing of his arrival, and being no stranger to his abilities, sent this same Hazael, (who was then become one of his prime ministers) to wait upon him with a very noble present, and to enquire of him whether he should † recover of the sickness which he then laboured under. The prophet told Hazael, that his master might recover, because his distemper was not of itself mortal, but that he was very well assured that he would not: and then looking stedfastly upon him, he broke out into tears, upon the prospect (as he told him) of the * many barbarous calamities which he would bring upon Israel, when once he was advanced to power, as that he would be, because he was assured by Divine revelation that he was to be king of Syria. At these words Hazael's ambition took wing; and therefore returning to his master, he concealed the prophet's answer, and gave him good hopes of his recovery, but the next day took care to prevent it, by *² stifling his breath with a thick cloth dipped in water: and as Benhadad had no son of his own, and Hazael was a man of great esteem, especially among the soldiery, he was without much difficulty declared his successor.

The next thing which Elisha did was to have Jehu anointed king of Israel, pursuant

† What Benhadad's distemper was, we are nowhere told in Scripture; but it is very evident, that it was not of so desperate a nature but that he might have recovered of it, had he not had foul play for his life. According to the account of Josephus, it was no more than a fit of melancholy; for "when he came to understand (as he tells us) that all these alarms of chariots and horsemen, that had given such an irreparable rout to him and his army, were in truth only judicial impressions of affright and terror, without any foundation, he looked upon it as a declaration from heaven against him; and this anxiety of thought made him as sick in the body too as he was in his mind." *Jewish Antiq.* l. v. c. 2.

* The particulars are thus enumerated:—"I know the evil that thou wilt do to the children of Israel; their strong-holds wilt thou set on fire; their young men wilt thou slay with the sword; and wilt dash their children, and rip up their women with child," 2 Kings viii. 12. That dashing young children against the stones was one piece of barbarous cruelty, which the people of the east were apt to run into in the prosecution of their wars, is plainly intimated in that passage of the Psalmist's, alluding to the calamities which preceded the Babylonish captivity; "O daughter of Babylon, wasted with misery! yea, happy shall he be that rewardeth thee, as thou hast served us. Blessed shall he be, that taketh thy children and throweth them against the stones," Psal. cxxxvii. 8, 9. Nor was this inhuman practice quite out of use among nations that pretended to more politeness; for, according to the remains of ancient fame, the Grecians, when they became masters of Troy, were so cruel as to throw Astyanax, Hector's son, a child in his mother's arms, (as Homer re-

presents him) headlong from one of the towers of the city. The ripping up women with child is the highest degree of brutal cruelty; and a cruelty for which there is no occasion, because, kill but the mother, and the child dies of course; and yet it has been often known, that in the heat of execution, this barbarity has been committed. Nay, there is reason to believe that Hazael, in his war with the Gileadites, 2 Kings x. 32, 33. verified this part of the prophet's prediction concerning him; for what Amos, complaining of his cruelty to these people, calls threshing Gilead with threshing instruments of iron, both the Septuagint and Arabic versions read, he sawed the big-bellied women of Gilead with iron saws. *Le Clerc's* and *Calmet's* Commentaries.

*² This he did, that no signs of violence might appear upon him; for had the people in the least suspected his being murdered, Hazael would not so easily have acceded to the throne; because (according to the account of Josephus) Benhadad was a man of such reputation among the people of Syria and Damascus, that as his memory was celebrated among them with divine honours, his death, no doubt had it been known to have been violent, would have been fully revenged upon the murderer. *Jewish Antiq.* lib. ix. c. 2. We may observe, however, that history makes mention of some other princes who have died in the same manner that Benhadad did; that the emperor Tiberius (according to Suetonius) was, in his last sickness, choaked in his bed by a pillow crammed into his mouth, or (as Tacitus has it) was smothered to death under a vast load of bed-clothes; and that king Demetrius, the son of Philip, (as well as the emperor Fredrick the II.) was hurried out of the world the same way. *Calmet's* Comment.

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to the order that was given to his master Elijah, and to the Divine decree of punishing the house of Ahab for their manifold impieties. Ramoth-Gilead was a place of long dispute between the two crowns of Israel and Syria. Jehoram, king of Israel, had lately had an engagement with Hazael, king of Syria, not far from it, wherein he had received some very dangerous wounds, and was gone down to Jezreel to be cured of them. His army however † continued the siege under the command of Jehu, who, in the king's absence, acted as captain-general. This Elisha thought was no improper opportunity to execute the orders which were left upon him to do; and therefore †² calling one of his minor prophets, he bid him go to Ramoth-Gilead, and †³ there anoint Jehu, the grandson of Nimshi, as king of Israel, with the utmost secrecy, and then to come away with the utmost expedition. When the prophet came thither, he found the officers in a council of war, and Jehu at the head of them. Desiring therefore to speak with him in private, he did what his instructions were; and reminding the general of the prophecies of Elijah, concerning the utter extinction of the house of Ahab, he enjoined him (now that he was invested with power) to put them in execution.

The officers that were with Jehu had but a contemptible opinion of the prophet, for persons of this character they looked upon as a * kind of madmen; and yet when they

† It is supposed by some interpreters, that the city of Ramoth-Gilead was taken by Jehoram before he departed from it to be cured of his wounds. This they gather from the mention made of the inner-chamber, 2 Kings ix. 2. the top of the stairs, ver. 13. and from that caution, which Jehu thinks advisable, "Let none go forth, or escape out of the city," ver. 15. But these arguments will not do. What we render "out of the city," does signify every whit as properly, "from before the city," i. e. out of the camp or army that is besieging the city. But, even if this be not so, the Israelites might, at this time, have the suburbs or out-buildings belonging to the city in their possession, where the general might have his head-quarters, and from whence he might give orders to the piquet guard (as we call it) that none should be permitted to move. For had the town been already in their hands, we cannot see why Jehoram should have kept all Israel there, ver. 14. i. e. all the military force of Israel, when a strong garrison would have been sufficient. *Pool's* Annotations.

†² The Jewish doctors are of opinion, that the prophet whom Elisha sent upon this message was Jonah; but, upon this supposition, he must at this time have been a very young man, because Jeroboam the second (in whose reign Jonah prophesied) did not ascend the throne till about fifty years after this unction of Jehu king of Israel. However this be, it is reasonable to think that Elisha himself did not go to perform this office, either because he was now grown old and unfit for such a journey, or because he was a person too well known, and not so proper to be employed in an affair that required secrecy. *Patrick's* and *Calmet's* Commentaries.

†³ The Jews are of opinion, that none of the kings of Israel were anointed but those that were of the house of David, and these only when there was a question about their succession; as Solomon, they say, needed not to have been anointed, had it not been for the faction of Adonijah. But in the case of Jehu, in whom the succession of the kingdom of Israel was to

be translated out of the right line of the family of Ahab into another family, which had no right to the kingdom, but merely the appointment of God, there was a necessity for his unction, in order both to convey to him a title, and to invest him in the actual possession of the kingdom: For if that (which some imagine from 1 Kings xix. 16.) be true, viz. that the prophet Elijah did, before this time, anoint Jehu, that unction did only confer on him a remote right to the kingdom, in the same manner as Samuel's unction did to David, 1 Sam. xvi. 13. *Patrick's* Commentary, and *Pool's* Annotations.

* The officers who were in company with Jehu, might easily perceive, by the habit, and air, and manner of speech of the person who accosted Jehu so boldly, and when he had done his business vanished so suddenly, that he was a prophet; but then there might be several reasons which might induce men of their profession to have a contemptible opinion of men of that order. The rigid and obscure course of life which the prophets led, their neglect of themselves and of the things of this world, might pass with them for a kind of infatuation; and the holy exercises to which they devoted themselves, for no more than a religious frenzy. Besides this, the false prophets which they had seen in the court of Ahab had given just offence; and, by their affected gestures and studied contortions, (whereby they thought to recommend their crude enthusiasms), made themselves justly ridiculous and contemptible. And therefore it is no wonder that these officers, at first sight, should censure a true, as they thought they had reason to judge of the false prophets with whom they had been acquainted; especially when we find some leading men, in the tribe of Judah, treating the prophets of the Lord (as in the case of Ezekiel, chap. xxiii. 30, 31. and of Jeremiah, chap. xxix. 26.) as fools and madmen; and some great names in the heathen world, looking upon all pretenders to inspiration in no better light; according to that noted passage in Cicero, "Quid habet auctoritatis furor iste, quem divinum

understood that he had anointed Jehu to be king, they proclaimed him with a general consent, and with a good body of forces marched directly to Jezreel, where Jehoram was not yet recovered of his wounds, and whither Ahaziah, king of Judah, was at that time come to visit him. Jehu's intent was to get Jezreel, before the king could have any intelligence of what had passed at Ramoth-Gilead, and there to surprise and seize him; but a † centinel, from the watch-tower, perceiving a body of men coming, and, by their hasty march, concluding that it was Jehu who commanded them, apprised the two kings of it; whereupon they got ready their chariots in all haste, and (as the Providence of God would have it) met him not far from the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, and perhaps (a) in the place where Naboth was stoned.

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Upon their first meeting, a few words convinced Jehoram that Jehu had conspired against him, and was come, in an hostile manner, to avenge †² the idolatry and wickedness of his mother Jezebel, whereupon he turned his chariot and fled: But Jehu soon overtook him with a swift arrow, which pierced his heart; and when he perceived him sinking in his chariot, he bid an officer that was by throw him into Naboth's field, which was near at hand, †³ that the word of the Lord might be fulfilled.

As for Ahaziah, he attempted to make his escape, but was pursued by a party of Jehu's men, who came up with him at Gur, and, as he was sitting in his chariot, gave him a mortal wound; so that as soon as he reached Megiddo he died. He was thence removed to Jerusalem, where he was buried in the royal sepulchre of his ancestors, and after a reign of less than two years, was succeeded by his mother Athaliah, who usurped the throne.

Jehu, in the mean time, made the best of his way to Jezreel, where Jezebel, resolving to keep up her grandeur to the last, * painted and dressed herself in her royal

vocatis, ut quæ sapiens non videt, ea videat insanus, et is, qui humanos sensus amiserit, divinos assecutus sit." *De Divinat.* lib. ii.

† In time of peace, as well as war, it was customary to have watchmen set on high and eminent places wherever the king was, to prevent his being surprised. Thus David, at Jerusalem, was informed by the watchmen, that his sons were escaped from the slaughter of Absalom, when he thought them all lost, 2 Sam. xiii. 34. and therefore Jehoram, who had an army lying before Ramoth Gilead, had good reason to keep a watchful eye upon every motion that came, especially from that quarter. *Patrick's and Calmet's Commentaries.*

(a) 1 Kings xxi. 19.

†² The answer which Jehu returns to Jehoram, is, —"What peace, so long as the whoredoms of thy mother Jezebel, and her witchcrafts are so many?" 2 Kings ix. 22. i. e. Whilst her idolatries, wherewith she bewitches the people, are still continued and multiplied. And he upbraids Jehoram with his mother's sins, and not with his own, because her's were more notorious and infamous, and what, by his connivance, he had made his own; because they were the principal reason why God did inflict, and he was come to execute these judgments; and because he could find no odious accusations against him, except about the golden calves, which he purposely declined mentioning, because he himself intended to keep them up. *Pool's Annotations.*

†³ The words which Jehu seems to quote are these, —"Surely I have seen yesterday the blood of Naboth, and the blood of his sons, saith the Lord, and I

will requite him in this place," 2 Kings ix. 26. It is to be observed, however, that in all the history of Naboth (which is recorded in 1 Kings xxi.) we find no mention made of the death of his sons; but it is no unusual thing for the Scripture to supply, in one place, that which has been omitted in another. It is not improbable, therefore, that as Naboth was accused of high treason, all his family was involved in his ruin, and all his estate confiscated to the king's exchequer: And what seems to confirm this opinion is, —That we find Elijah never once putting the king in mind to restore the vineyard to Naboth's children, nor the king, in the time of his repentance, ever once thinking to do it, because, in all human appearance, there were no heirs left. Notwithstanding this, Grotius and other learned men have observed, that these words may signify no more than the extreme poverty, to which Naboth's family was reduced by the death of their father, and the confiscation of his goods: For among the Hebrews, say they, all punishments and miseries are called blood, Lev. xvii. 4. and to take away their estate, upon which they would have lived, was in effect to take away their blood, in which is the life of every creature. But this is a little forced: And therefore, we should rather think that Jehu is here aggravating Ahab's crime, and reckoning the sons as slain with the father, because, by their being deprived of him, and of his estate, they were, in a manner, in as bad a condition as though they were dead. *Le Clerc's, Patrick's, and Calmet's Commentaries.*

* The words in the original import, "she put her eyes in paint," i. e. she used stibium, or antimony

A. M. 3001,
&c. or 4516.
Ant. Chris.
1003, &c.
or 895.

robes, and, looking out of her window, upbraided him with his treachery as he passed by, and reminded him of the unhappy fate of Zimri, who slew his king and master Elah: But, without making her any answer, he called to somebody to throw her out of the window, which † her own eunuchs did; so that by the fall the †² blood stained the walls of the palace, and when she was upon the pavement, the horses trampled her under foot, and the dogs devoured her body; insomuch, that when Jehu (in †³ consideration of her quality) ordered some of his servants to go and bury her, they found nothing of her remaining but her skull, feet, and palms of her hands: So punctually was the prophet's prediction fulfilled concerning this wicked and idolatrous woman!

Having thus settled himself in a quiet possession of Jezreel, Jehu sent a letter to the nobles and other great men, †⁴ who were at Samaria, and had the care of the princes of the blood, to chuse out whom they thought the fittest to set upon the throne of Israel: But they, being well aware with what intent he did this, and not unacquainted with the fate of the two kings he had already dispatched, returned him a very submissive answer, wherein they declared themselves entirely at his devotion. This declaration he took the advantage of; so that in his next message he commanded them †⁵ to send

pulverized, to make her eyes and eye-brows look black and large, which in several countries was accounted a great beauty. The use of paint has been of ancient date, and the art of blacking the hair, and beautifying the face, may be indulged to the vanity of the female sex; but it raises one's indignation to read of a Sardanapalus painting his eyes and eye-brows; of the ancient Greeks running into the same custom; and much more of the martial Romans: But there were fops in all nations then as well as now.

Ille supercilium madidâ fuligine tinctum

Obliquâ producit acu, pingitque tremantes

Attollens oculos.

Juv. Sat. ii.

† According to the custom of the eastern nations, the business of this sort of people was to attend upon queens in their chambers, who, by their great fidelity and obsequiousness, gained generally the esteem, and were admitted to the confidence of those they served, and from thence into places very often of great trust and profit. It is remarked however of Jezebel's eunuchs, that they were far from being faithful to her, to let us see how suddenly courtiers are wont to change with the fortune of their masters. *Patrick's Commentary.*

†² Some of the Jewish doctors look upon this as a punishment according to the *lex talionis*; for as she had done, so she suffered. She had caused Naboth to be stoned, and now she is condemned to be stoned herself. For there were two ways of stoning, either by throwing stones at malefactors till they had knocked them down and killed them; or by throwing them down upon the stones from an high place, and so dashing them to pieces. *Patrick's Commentary.*

†³ She was the daughter of Eth-baal king of Tyre; the wife of Ahab, and the mother of Jehoram, kings of Israel; the mother-in-law of Jehoram king of Judah, and the aunt of Ahaziah, who was likewise king of Judah. *Calmel's Commentary.*

†⁴ The words in the original, which our translation has followed, are, "Jehu wrote letters, and sent to Samaria, unto the rulers of Jezreel, to the elders, and to them that brought up Ahab's children," 2 Kings

x. i. But then the question is, how the rulers of Jezreel came to be at Samaria? Some have imagined indeed a mistake in the transcriber, and that instead of Jezreel, the word should be Israel, which is no great variation: But why may we not suppose, that upon hearing how Jehu had slain Jehoram, the great men of his court might take the children, and, for fear that they should fall into his hands, flee with them to Samaria, as the capital, and strongest place in the kingdom, where they might think of defending themselves against his usurpation, and (as his letter seems to import) of filling, with one of Ahab's family, the vacant throne. It was customary for princes of the blood, in those days, to be brought up in the families of the prime nobility of the nation; and therefore, whatever persons of this quality had these princes under their care, and saw the revolution that was like to happen, they might think it the most advisable way to hasten with them to Samaria, as a place of the most security: Or, for this very reason, Jehoram, when he went against Ramoth-Gilead, might have sent them thither, that they might be under cover from any ill accident that might possibly happen in his war with the king of Syria. *Patrick's Commentary, and Pool's Annotations.*

†⁵ Besides the accomplishment of the Divine decree, Jehu had this farther design in requesting this cruel service of the rulers, and elders, and great men of the nation, viz. that thereby he might engage them in the same crime and conspiracy with himself. For, by prevailing with them to murder Ahab's kinsmen in this manner, he tied them to his interest so closely, that if any of the inferior people had been minded to oppose his designs, they were, by this means, deprived of any man of figure and distinction to head them; and not only so, but by this expedient, Jehu thought likewise that he might, in a great measure, justify, at least lessen, the odium of his own cruel and perfidious conduct; for this is the sense of his appeal to the people, "Ye be righteous: Behold I have conspired against my master, and slew him; but who slew all these?" 2 Kings x. 9. As if he had said, "I own

him the heads of all the princes, who † were no less than seventy; and in this likewise being punctually obeyed, without any farther delay, he proceeded to extirpate every one that remained of Ahab's family, the great men of his court, and all his friends. For in his way to Samaria, meeting with some nephews and other relations of Ahasiah, who, †² knowing nothing of these transactions, were going to pay a visit to the court at Samaria, he ordered these likewise (which in all amounted to the number of forty-two) to be slain; and so (to give a better face to what he did) taking †⁵ Jonadab, the

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indeed, that I was a great instrument in taking off the late king; but am I more culpable than are the friends, the counsellors, the officers of Ahab? I pretend not to conceal my fault; but the approbation which the principal men of the nation have given it, in taking up arms against the house of Ahab, and the wonderful success that has attended this enterprise of mine, are not these a certain proof that God has raised me up to execute his decree in this respect? And ought you not to acknowledge, in this case, the interposition of his hand?" *Calmet's Commentary.*

† The sacred historian takes care to repeat the number of these princes of the blood in two separate places, (2 Kings x. 1. 6.) on purpose to shew the vile spirit of these great men, who could destroy so many royal persons to whom they were governors, and to whom they owed a just protection and defence: And therefore it was no more than they deserved, if, when "Jehu slew all that remained of the house of Ahab, and all his great men, till he left none," he included in that number (as some imaginè) these base perfidious time-servers. *Patrick's Commentary.*

†² Jehu must certainly have made wonderful expedition and secrecy in what he did, to have prevented the report (which generally spreads very fast) of what had passed at Jezreel. Two kings and a queen killed, the whole family of Ahab extinct, and a general change and revolution in the state; and yet not a word of this known at Jerusalem, (which was not quite fourscore miles distant from Jezreel) even though Ahasiah, the king of Judah, was one of the princes that were slain. *Calmet's Commentary.*

†³ Several learned men are of opinion, that this Jonadab was not the person who gave the precepts mentioned in Jeremiah, chap. xxxv. to his children, but another of that name, who lived in the days of Jeremiah: For it is not likely, they think, that a man addicted to such a quiet and retired life as he instituted, would have come to meet Jehu; and therefore they rather imagine that it was some military person of great note and esteem among the populace, whose interest might do Jehu great service, and whose advice, in many things, he afterwards followed. But why might not Jonadab (how wellsoever he might love retirement) come, upon this occasion, to congratulate Jehu's zeal against idolatry, and to advise and encourage him to proceed in fulfilling the will of God revealed to him? And the reason is obvious why Jehu might be glad of the countenance and company of such a man, whose known piety would gain him more reverence and respect than the attendance of any great captain could procure him. But though Jonadab the son of Rechab is allowed to be a good

man, yet it does not therefore follow, that he revived the ancient rules of the Rechabites (as some are apt to think) upon a religious account, but purely as a matter of policy. The story is this: the Rechabites were of the race of Hobab, or Jethro the Kenite, priest of Midian, and father-in-law to Moses, 1 Chron. ii. 55. so that the Kenites were Midianites, and the Midianites were dwellers in tents from the beginning; for in this manner Abraham lived while he sojourned in the land of Canaan; and in imitation of him, the Midianites, who were of his posterity, might do the same. Now when the children of Hobab, who were all Kenites, were invited by Moses to go along with the people of God into Canaan, they might retain this pastoral manner of life, not only as a badge of the nation from whence they were descended, but as a means likewise to make their habitation more quiet and secure (in a land where they were strangers), both from the envy of the Jews at home, and the danger of enemies abroad. For having neither houses nor lands, but tents and cattle only, which they could move upon occasion from place to place, they could not be so subject to hostile invasions. But as, in length of time, these Kenites were tempted, by the more pleasant living of the Israelites, to think of changing this custom of their ancestors, this Jonadab, the son of Rechab, a famous Kenite, and of much esteem and authority among them, took occasion to renew it again, and to bind his posterity to observe it; for which end he forbade the drinking of wine, lest the desire of so delicious a liquor might tempt them to plant vineyards, and build houses, as the Jews did. What authority he had to enforce these arbitrary injunctions we cannot learn. It is plain, that he laid his posterity under no curse in case of disobedience; on the contrary, we find that the prophet Jeremiah, chap. xxxv. 2, &c. was directed by God to bring them to an apartment in the temple, to set wine before them, and invite them to drink; which would have been an unworthy action, if they had been under an indispensable obligation of abstaining from it: and, on the other hand, the Rechabites refused it, not because their father had laid them under any curse if they disobeyed him, but because he promised that "they should live many days in the land wherein they were strangers," if they obeyed his voice, Jer. xxxv. 7. which promise, being also made to those who "honoured their parents," Exod. xx. 12. might the more incline them to that strict obedience, for which they are so highly commended by God in the place above cited. Upon the whole, therefore, it appears, that Jonadab only renewed what his ancestors had observed long before he was born; and that his authority prevailed among

A. M. 3001, son of Rechab, a man of great strictness and sobriety of life, into the chariot with him, &c. or 4516. he proceeded in his journey to Samaria.

Ant. Chris.
1003, &c.
or 895.

As soon as he was come to Samaria, he first destroyed all that were left of the house of Ahab in that city, and then, pretending that he designed to offer an uncommon sacrifice unto Baal, he issued out a proclamation, commanding all his priests, prophets, and worshippers, upon pain of death, to be present at this great solemnity. They all came; and when they, and they only, (for care was taken that none of the servants of the Lord should be among them) were met together in Baal's temple, and the * priests in their proper vestment, he commanded his guards to go in and fall upon them, and kill them all. After this, they ran to the temple of Baal, brake down his image, and the † other images of the like nature, and burnt them publicly. They demolished the temple quite, laid it flat with the ground, and that the place whereon it stood might in all future ages be looked upon as despicable, they made it a *² common jakes.

Thus entirely did Jehu destroy the family of Ahab, and the worship of Baal in the kingdom of Israel, for which he was so far approved and rewarded by God, that he entailed the crown upon his family to the fourth generation: But policy prevailed against religion, and persuaded him to continue the old idolatry, even when he had destroyed the new. The calves which Jeroboam had set up he would not part with: And therefore God, to make him sensible of his displeasure, stirred up Hazael, king of Syria, to invade his country; who, having taken several of his frontier towns, did thereby open a way to make great ravages in several other places of his kingdom, especially in the country beyond Jordan, where the tribes of Manasseh, Gad, and Reuben suffered much. In a word, we may say of Jehu, that as his conduct was of a mixt nature, God rewarded his obedience, but punished his idolatry; who, after he had reigned eight and twenty years, died, and was buried in Samaria, and (without any opposition) was succeeded by his son Jehoahaz.

Jehoahaz, to preserve the crown of Israel from uniting with that of Judah, pursued the same method that his predecessors had done in relation to the political worship of the golden calves; so that, during his whole reign, God sorely afflicted both him and his people, by delivering him into the hands of Hazael, and his son Benhadad, the third Syrian king of that name, who reduced him to that low ebb, that he had no more than fifty horsemen, ten chariots, and ten thousand foot soldiers left. At length, through

his brethren to continue this abstinence for two hundred years after he was dead, not as a matter of religion, but as a mere civil custom. *Patrick's Commentary*, and *Bedford's Scripture Chronology*, lib. 6. c. 2.

* It was the custom of almost all idolaters to be very curious about the external pomp of their ceremonies, wherein indeed the chief part of their worship does consist. All the priests of Baal were clothed in fine linen, and their chief priests, no doubt, had some particular ornaments to distinguish them. Baal and Astarte were Phœnician deities; and therefore, as *Silius Italicus*, in his description of the priests of Hercules, has given us an account in what manner the Phœnician priests (when in their office) were habited, we have reason from thence to suppose, that the dress of the priests of Baal was much of the same kind.

—Nec discolor ulli

Ante aras cultus: velantur corpora lino,

Et Pelusiaco præfulget stamine vertex.

Discinctis mos thura dare, atque è lege parentum

Sacrificam lato vestem distinguere clavo.

† These idolaters, besides the Supreme God whom they took Baal to be, worshipped several other lesser gods, whom they call Baalim, and whose images were placed in this temple: for it was an ancient custom (as *Servius* notes), after the priest had invoked the particular god for whom the sacrifice was intended, to address himself to all the other gods, lest any of them should think themselves neglected. *Patrick's Commentary*.

*² The histories of the east furnish us with several examples of princes inflicting this kind of punishment upon such as were found guilty of high treason, or of contravening the king's commands. To this the decree which Darius made in favour of the Jews plainly alludes: "Whosoever shall alter this word, let timber be pulled down from his house, and being set up, let him be hanged thereon; and let his house be made a dunghill." *Ezra* vi. 11. And to the same purpose is that threat of *Nebuchadnezzar* to the magicians, &c. "If ye will not make known unto me the dreams, with the interpretation thereof, ye shall be cut in pieces, and your houses shall be made a dunghill." *Dan.* ii. 5.

the many defeats he had received, and the grievous oppression under which he laboured, grown weary of life as well as government, after a very troublesome reign of seventeen years, he died, and was succeeded by his son Joash, a prince more fortunate, and not altogether so irreligious as his father. But to enquire a little now into the affairs of the kingdom of Judah.

When Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab, and wife to Jehoram, king of Judah, understood that Jehu had slain her son Ahaziah, being a very ambitious, bloody-minded woman, and resolving to take the government upon herself, † she destroyed all the children that Jehoram had by another wife, and all their offspring, that so she might ascend the throne without any opposition. Jehoshaba, the sister of Ahaziah by the father's side, but not by the mother's, was, at this time, married to Jehoiada, the high priest; and while Athaliah's executioners were murdering the rest, she stole away †² Joash, the son of Ahaziah, and kept him and his nurse concealed * in an apartment of the temple †³ for the space of six years.

In the seventh year, his uncle Jehoiada, being determined to place him upon the throne of his ancestors, and to this purpose having engaged the priests and Levites, and the leading men in all the parts of the kingdom, in his interest, in a public assembly produced him, and made them take an oath of secrecy and fidelity to him. Then putting himself in a proper posture of defence, †⁴ he distributed the arms which David

† The consideration of the fate that attended these royal families, is enough to make any one bless Providence for having been born of a meaner parentage. The whole offspring of Jeroboam, Baasha, and Ahab, kings of Israel, was cut off for their idolatry, so that there was not one left; and the kings of Judah, having contracted an affinity with the house of Ahab, and being by them seduced into the same crime, were so destroyed by three successive massacres, that there was but one left. For, first, Jehoram slew all his brethren; then Jehu slew all his brother's children: and now Athaliah destroys all the rest that her executioners could meet with. Enraged she was to see Ahab's family cut off; and therefore she resolved to do as much by the house of David. As she was one of Ahab's family, she had reason to apprehend that Jehu, who had a commission to extirpate all, would not be long before he called upon her: Her only way, therefore, to secure herself against him, was to usurp the throne; but this, she knew, she could not do without destroying all the royal progeny, who were no well-wishers to the worship of Baal, which she had abetted and was resolved to maintain. *Pool's Annotations*, *Patrick's Commentary*, and *Bedford's Scripture Chronology*, lib. 6. c. 2.

†² Some interpreters are of opinion, that Joash was not the real son of Ahaziah (in whom the race of Solomon, in a direct line, was extinct), but properly the son of Nathan, and only called Ahaziah's, because he succeeded him in the throne: For had he been Ahaziah's true son, and Athaliah's grandson, why might not she have declared him king, and, during his minority at least, taken the administration into her own hands? But therefore she exercised her cruelty, as they say, in destroying the princes related to Ahaziah, because she was unwilling to have the kingdom go into another branch of David's family. But notwithstanding these reasons, and the authority of those

who produce them, in the second books both of Kings and Chronicles, we find this Joash so frequently called the son of Ahaziah, the king's son, &c. without any manner of restriction, that we cannot be persuaded to look out for any other father for him.

* Josephus relates this young king's escape and concealment thus:—"Jehosabath, the sister of Ahaziah, and wife to Jehoiada the high priest, coming into the palace, found a male child, of about a year old, whose name was Joash, among the dead bodies of the sons of Ahaziah, whom the nurse, it seems, had there laid, on purpose to save its life: She therefore conveyed it away to her own lodgings, and thence to the temple, where she took care of it through the whole six years of Athaliah's reign, without making any one privy to the secret, except her own husband:" who, upon this extraordinary occasion, might dispense with the law, or rather custom, which allowed none but the priests who officiated to lodge in the apartments of the temple. *Jewish Antiq.* lib. ix. c. 7. and *Calmet's Commentary*.

†³ It is very likely, that Athaliah might imagine that she had slain all, and so think herself secure; or, if she suspected that this one was preserved, she might not think it advisable to make any strict search, lest thereby she should alarm the people with the notion that there was still a son of David's family left, which might be a means to make them uneasy under her government, and desirous of a change: Besides that she might have the vanity to think of being able, in a short time, to secure the crown to herself, in such a manner, as that she should not need to fear such a weak competitor. *Pool's Annotations*.

†⁴ The captains and other officers, who were admitted to the knowledge of Jehoiada's design, came into the temple unarmed for fear of giving suspicion: But as David had erected a kind of sacred armory in one of the apartments of the temple, wherein the wea-

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&c. or 4522.
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had reposed in the temple among his people, whom he divided into three bodies, one to guard the person of the king, and the other two to secure the gates of the temple, that none might be permitted to enter (except the priests and Levites who were to officiate) upon pain of death. After this he brought out the young prince, set the crown on his head, † put the book of the law into his hand; and because his right had been interrupted, anointed him, and, with the sound of the trumpet, proclaimed him, which was seconded with the joyful shouts and acclamations of the people.

Athaliah hearing the noise, made all the haste she could to the temple; but when, to her great surprise, she saw the young king on a throne, which was erected †² in an eminent place, and the people and great men about him rejoicing, she rent her clothes and cried out treason! But Jehoiada soon silenced her: For having commanded the guards to seize and carry her out of the temple, and to put all to the sword who should pretend to rescue or assist her, they immediately executed their orders; and taking her out of the sacred ground, brought her, without any opposition, to the stable-gate belonging to the palace, and there slew her.

Joash being thus seated on the throne by the high priest's directions, made a covenant with the people, that they should restore the true worship of God, continue in it, and root out all idolatry; and then he made another between himself and the people, viz. that he should govern according to law, and that they should be mindful to obey him. When this was done, the multitude rose, destroyed the temple, demolished the altar, broke down the images, and killed Matan, the priest of Baal, who was then in waiting. After this Jehoiada abolished some corruptions which former reigns had introduced, made some reforms in the service of the temple, and then, with all the rulers, and officers, and people, conducted the king to the royal palace, and put him into a quiet possession of the kingdom of Judah.

pons, and other trophies, which he and several other generals had gained from their enemies, and as monuments of their victories had dedicated them to the Lord, were deposited; Jehoiada took care, upon this occasion, to have this magazine of military provisions opened, so that there was no want of any sort of arms. *Joseph. Antiq. lib. ix. c. 7.*

† Those who think that the word *Eduth*, which we translate *testimony*, comes from the Hebrew root *Adah*, which signifies *to clothe, put on, or adorn*, suppose that it was some royal ornament, which the high priest put upon the king as a mark of regal dignity, at the same time that he placed the crown upon his head; and this ornament they conceive to have been a bracelet, because, in the story of the Amalekite, we read, that he brought to David the bracelet that was upon Saul's arm, as well as the crown that was upon his head. But since, in the xviith chapter of Deuteronomy, which treats expressly of the election and duty of a king, there is this injunction given,—“That he should write him a copy of the law in a book, out of that which is before the priests, the Levites,” ver. 18.—others, (with more probability) have thought, that at his coronation, a roll, containing a copy of the law (which is frequently called a testimony, as being a witness of God's will and mens duty), was put in his hands, which he held, for that time, in the way of a sceptre or a truncheon; though others will have it, that when Jehoiada crowned Joash, he laid the book of the law upon his head; to which custom holy Job (chap. xxxi. 35, 36.) as they think, seems to allude,

when he wishes, “O that mine adversary had written a book! Surely I would take it upon my shoulder, and bind it as a crown to me:” For the manner among the Orientals, when they had received a letter from any person they highly respected, was to hold it up to their heads before they opened it. *Patrick's and Calmet's Commentaries, and Pool's Annotations.*

†² The words in the text are,—“And when she looked, behold the king stood by a pillar, as the manner was,” 2 Kings xi. 14. Now there were two famous pillars, which Solomon erected “in the porch of the temple,” whereof that on the right-hand was called Jachin, and that on the left Boaz, and were each of them (according to the account we have) “eighteen cubits high,” 1 Kings vii. 15, 21. Solomon's design, in setting up these two pillars, is generally supposed to have been, in order to represent the pillar of the cloud and the pillar of fire, which went before the Israelites, and conducted them in the wilderness. The pillar on the right-hand represented the pillar of the cloud, and that on the left the pillar of fire; and near one of these pillars, in all probability, the royal throne was erected: Unless we can suppose, that what is here called a pillar was that brazen scaffold, “five cubits long, five broad, and five high,” which Solomon made at first, upon his dedicating the temple, but was afterwards continued for the king, upon any solemn occasion, to appear upon, and where doubtless there was a throne of state. *Calmet's Commentary, and Bedford's Scripture Chronology, lib. vi. c. 2.*

Seven years old was Joash when he began to reign, which was in the seventh year of Jehu king of Israel; and while he was under his uncle Jehoiada's guidance and direction, he governed the nation very well: But when once that good old counsellor died, (who, in the * hundred and thirtieth year of his age, paid the last debt to nature, and, in consideration of his many great services done the public, had the honour to be buried in one of the royal sepulchres), he fell into the hands of such persons as were idolaters in their hearts, and they, taking the advantage of his youth, † by their crafty management and insinuations, first obtained a licence for themselves to worship such idols as they should think fit, and then proceeded to delude him into the like apostasy.

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In the beginning of his reign, he was very solicitous about the house of God, wherein he had so long and so happily been concealed; and as it was greatly gone to decay, through the negligence of former princes, and the depredation of Athaliah's children, he took no small pains to settle revenues, and procure contributions for its reparation. ‡ But now, by his connivance at least, if not by his own example, men began to forsake the temple of the Lord, and to addict themselves to the worship of idols and groves consecrated to false gods; insomuch, that the Divine vengeance was kindled both against the king and people of Judah, whereof they had notice by several prophets, but all to no purpose. At length the Spirit of God stirred up Zachariah, the son of Jehoiada the high priest, to remonstrate against the general impiety; which he did in such strong terms, that the king was offended at his freedom, and, † little remembering the

* This the historian takes notice of, as a life remarkably long in those days; and yet our learned Usher has observed, that in an age not far remote from our time, several men out-lived this period. The words of Joseph Scaliger, which he quotes, are to this effect: "Several persons we could mention, that have lived 120, 125, and 130 years, whom we knew, have seen, and well remember: But in the year 1584, there was at Paris a miracle of an old man, who bore arms under Lewis XI. and, at the age of 140 years and upwards, had the use of his limbs and faculties entire: But not a greater miracle was he than our Thomas Parr, the son of John Parr of Winnington, in the county of Salop, who abode with his father as long as he lived, but after his decease married his first wife at the age of 80. With her he lived for the space of two and thirty years, in which time, being convicted of adultery with another woman, he did public penance in the church of Alberbury when he was 105. In his 122d year, he married his second wife, who abode with him as long as he lived: But at length he was brought up to London by the Earl of Arundel and Surrey, in the year 1635, and shewn to the king of Great Britain, when he was some months more than 152 years old. Two years after this he died in Arundel House, and might probably have lived some years longer had he continued in his native air. *Chronol. Sacra*, c. 12.

† The Jews have a fancy, that the courtiers who, after the death of Jehoiada, got possession of Joash, flattered him with a conceit, that he himself was worthy of Divine honours, who had been brought up in the house of God, a favour that was never granted to a mere man, and that the king's being pleased with this kind of flattery, provoked God to send upon him the calamities we afterwards read of; even as the angel of God smote Herod, for assuming the glory to himself, when the people, in commendation of his ora-

tion, said, "That it was the voice of a god, and not of a man," Acts xii. 22. But this is mere fancy. If the princes of Judah wanted to obtain a toleration from the king for their idol worship, it would have been highly absurd for them to go about to persuade him that himself was a god, since they that have the folly to establish their own adoration are always very jealous of the worship of any other. Their making obeisance therefore to the king, denotes the humble posture wherein they represented their petition, that they might not be confined to unnecessary and troublesome journeys, in coming to Jerusalem to worship, but he indulged the liberty (which their forefathers had) of worshipping God in high places; which, when they had once obtained, they knew they might then worship idols without observation or disturbance. *Patrick's* and *Calmet's* Commentaries, and *Pool's* Annotations.

‡ Jehoiada, the high priest, is supposed to die in, or near the three and twentieth year of king Joash's reign, so that Joash might be about thirty years old when the princes of Judah seduced him to idolatry; and this makes it the more wonderful, what possibly could give occasion to such a shameful change in so advanced an age, unless we can suppose that the conduct of the priests in embezzelling the money, collected for the reparation of the temple, (whereof he complains to Jehoiada, 2 Kings xii. 7.) might curdle his temper, and give him some disgust. *Le Clerc's* Commentary, and *Howell's* History in the Notes.

† This sin, besides the contempt of God's prophet, and of the sacred place where he was murdered, had an horrid ingratitude in it, since Zachariah was the son of him to whom the king owed his life and kingdom, and who himself assisted his father in his unction, as some think; because it is said, that "Jehoiada and his sons anointed him," 2 Chron. xxiii. 11. But if Jehoiada was high priest, this son

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kindness of his father and mother, to whom he was indebted for his own life, gave orders to destroy the son; so that a band of ruffians, appointed for that purpose, fell upon him, and, in one of the courts of the temple, stoned him to death, calling upon God to avenge his cause.

And it was not long before the great avenger of all violence and wrong effectually did it; for the very next year, the Syrian army under Hazael passed the Jordan, and, marching directly to Jerusalem, slew in their way all the princes and great men that had seduced their king to idolatry.

Joash was in no condition to make any resistance: And therefore, to redeem himself from the miseries of a siege, took all the rich vessels which his ancestors had devoted to the service of God, and all the gold that was laid up in the treasures of the temple (besides what was found in the royal treasury), and sent it as a present to Hazael, to prevail with him to withdraw his troops. Hazael for the present might withdraw them; but † the next year they marched again into the territories of Judah; and, though Hazael was not there in person, defeated the forces which Joash sent against them, made great havock in the country, entered Jerusalem, put some of the princes and rulers to the sword, and treated Joash himself with no small indignity and contempt. But this was not all; for no sooner was the Syrian army departed, but the distemper, or rather that complication of distempers wherewith, some time before, God had afflicted Joash, grew worse and worse; so that, being confined to his bed, two of his own servants, Zabad and Jehozabad, conspired against him, and †² slew him; who, after a reign of forty years, was succeeded by his son Amaziah, and buried in the city of David, but †³ not in the royal sepulchres.

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Amaziah was five and twenty years old when he began to reign, and for some time behaved tolerably well, though he followed the example of his ancestors, in letting the high places stand, and in suffering the people to offer sacrifice and burn incense there. †⁴ As soon as he found himself settled in the throne, he very justly took revenge of the two traitors that had murdered his father; but †⁵ their children he did not touch; be-

is not reckoned among the successors of Aaron, 1 Chron. vi. and therefore it is likely that he was a younger son of Jehoiada; for had he been the eldest, he would have had sufficient authority, without the spirit of prophecy, to have reprov'd Joash for his idolatry. Ludovicus Capellus therefore thinks it probable, that his brother, the high priest, connived at the king's apostacy, and that this younger brother was inspired by God to reprove it; which boldness Joash and his courtiers thought they might punish with some colour, by alleging that he was not moved to it by the Spirit of God, but by a rash pragmatcal temper of his own, which they incited the people to chastise. *Patrick's Commentary.*

† It is highly probable, that besides the present of gold which Joash sent Hazael, in order to bribe him to withdraw his army, he had made him a promise of an annual tribute; and that, upon his refusal to pay it, the Syrian army took the field the next year, and, as the expression in the text is, "executed judgment upon Joash," 2 Chron. xxiv. 24. For (according to the author of the Jewish traditions upon the second book of Chronicles) while they killed his children before his eyes, they upbraideth him with the cruel and unjust death of Zachariah. *Calmet's Commentary.*

†³ These two murderers (mongrel fellows, whose fathers were Jews, but their mothers aliens) perhaps

were of his bed-chamber; and, having constant access to the king, might more easily accomplish their design; however, he was so weak and feeble, that he could make no resistance, and had fallen into that contempt and disesteem, that his guards minded not what became of him. *Patrick's Commentary.*

†⁴ Though the people could not punish wicked kings for their impieties while they lived, yet they fixed an odium upon their memory when they were dead; whereby they both preserved the sacredness of the Supreme Power, (as Grotius, de Jure Belli et Pacis, lib. i. cap. 3. sect. 16. speaks) and kept kings, in some measure, under awe, for fear of what might befall them after their decease. *Patrick's Commentary.*

†⁵ It seems that these two assassins continued to be men of weight and interest at court, even after they had murdered their king; for his son, we may observe from 2 Kings xiv. 8. retained them in his service for some time, nor durst he venture to execute justice upon them, until he was well settled in his authority, and had divested those of all power who were their friends and abettors. *Patrick's Commentary.*

†⁶ In this he acted like a good man, and contrary to the wicked customs of many kingdoms, where, if any one be guilty of high treason, not only he, but his children likewise, who are neither conscious nor partakers of any of his traitorous practices, are equally

cause it was contrary to the law, that (a) "children should be put to death for their fathers." About four and fifty years before his accession, the Edomites had revolted, in the reign of Jehoram, from the kingdom of Judah; and therefore, having a design to reduce them to their former subjection, he new-modelled and new-officered his army; and, upon a general muster, found them to be no less than † three hundred thousand fighting men; but thinking these too few for his intended expedition, he hired of the king of Israel an hundred thousand more, for whom he †² paid him an hundred talents; but, †³ by the direction of a prophet, whom God sent to him on purpose to dissuade him from employing these auxiliaries, they were (with much ado) discharged, and himself went in person against the Edomites with none but his own men—the people of Judah. However, being thus shamefully dismissed, as they thought, they were not a little exasperated against Amaziah, and therefore, in their return home, they plundered all the towns in their way; killed no less than three thousand men, and carried away a considerable booty, to make an amends for the plunder they had promised themselves in the Edomitish war.

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Amaziah, (as we said) with none but his own forces, marched against the Edomites. In the †⁴ Valley of Salt he gave them battle; slew ten thousand upon the spot, and took ten thousand prisoners. From thence he marched to Selah †⁵, the metropolis of Arabia Petræa, which he soon became master of, and, from the top of the rock whereon the town stood, * threw the ten thousand he had taken prisoners headlong, so that they were all dashed to pieces.

devoted to destruction, lest they (forsooth) should form any faction against the prince, or seek revenge for their father's death. *Le Clerc's Commentary.*

(a) Deut. xxiv. 6.

† Hence some have made an observation, how much the iniquities of the people of Judah had diminished their numbers since the days of Jehoshaphat, which was a space of but eighty-two years; for this king could bring no more than three hundred thousand men into the field; whereas Jehoshaphat brought almost four times as many. *Patrick's Commentary.*

†² If these be reckoned for talents of silver, (as they generally are) each talent, at an hundred and twenty-five pounds weight, and each pound weight at four pounds in value, the whole will amount to fifty thousand pounds Sterling, which will be but ten shillings to each man, officers included. Very low pay! Unless we suppose, that this whole sum was given to the king of Israel for the loan of so many men, and that the men were to have their pay besides; or rather, that they were to have no other pay but the booty which they took from the enemy, and that this was the true reason why they were so exasperated at their dismissal, as to "fall upon the cities of Judah, from Samaria even unto Beth horon," 2 Chron. xxv. 13. They went very probably first to Samaria, where they complained to their own king of the bad treatment they had received from Amaziah, and desired some reparation to be made them for the affront put upon them, and the loss of the profit which they might have made in the war; but, finding him not inclinable to make them satisfaction, they immediately fell foul upon the territories of Judah, and, from Samaria (for that is the place of their setting out) even to Beth-horon, a town not far distant from Jerusalem,

ravaged the country, and did the mischief here mentioned; which they might more easily do, because the war with Edom had drained the country of all the forces that should have opposed them. *Patrick's and Calmet's Commentaries* on 2 Chron. xxv. 6. 13.

†³ The Jews will needs have it, that this prophet was Amos the father of Isaiah; but their tradition is built upon a mistake, viz. that Amos the prophet was Isaiah's father.

†⁴ This valley lay towards the land of Edom, and was so called, either from the salt-springs which were therein, or from the salt that was dug up there. *Patrick's Commentary* on 2 Sam. viii. 13.

†⁵ *Selah*, in the Hebrew tongue, signifies a *rock*, and so exactly answers to the Greek word *Petra*, that most commentators, with very good reason, have agreed that this *Selah* is the same with *Petra*, the metropolis of Arabia Petræa, and from whence (as some imagine) the whole country took its name; though others rather think, that as this city had its name from its situation on a rock, so the adjacent tract was called Arabia Petræa, from its being overspread with such rocks or rocky hills. *Wells's Geography* of the Old Testament, vol. iii.

* That this was an ancient punishment among the Romans we may learn from Livy, Plutarch, and several others; as Mr Selden (*de Synedriis*, lib. i.) observes, that it was in use among other nations; but we do not find it commonly practised among the Jews. It is not in the catalogue of the punishments which Moses enacts; neither was it ever inflicted by any regular judicature: And therefore one would think that the Edomites, either by some such like cruelty to the people of Judah, had provoked them to make a retaliation in this manner, or that they were, in their very disposition, so apt to revolt, that there could

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But his cruelty to the captives was not the worst thing he was guilty of in this expedition. In his return, he * brought with him the idols of Edom, to which he paid adoration, and offered incense; which thing provoked the Lord so, that he sent a prophet to reprove him for his apostacy, and to threaten him with the destruction, which in a short time came to pass. For, being now elated with his success against the Moabites, and resenting the affront which the Israelitish army had lately put upon him, he † sent Joash king of Israel a challenge, to meet and engage him in a pitched battle.

Joash (as it deserved) *² received the message with contempt: but, when he found that Amaziah was hereby but the more irritated, and persisted in his purpose of fighting, he met him, and gave him such a reception, that he routed his army, took him prisoner, and carried him *³ to his own city of Jerusalem; where he entered in triumph, plundered the temple and palace of all that was valuable, laid a tax upon the land, carried off hostages †² for the security of the payment; and that, in case of any failure in

be no keeping them in subjection without some such sad exemplary punishment as this. *Calmet's Dissert. sur les Supplices*, and *Le Clerc's Commentary* on 2 Chron. xxv. 12.

* Idolatry, at the best, can no ways be apologised for; but no reason can be invented why any person should make the objects of his adoration, such gods as could "not deliver their own people out of the enemies hands," as the prophet very justly reproves Amaziah, 2 Chron. xxv. 15. unless we suppose that the images of these gods were so very beautiful, that he perfectly fell in love with them, or that he worshipped them for fear they should owe him a spite, and do him some mischief, in revenge for what he had done against the Edomites. How much more wise were the sentiments of Fabius Maximus, upon the like occasion, who, having conquered Tarentum, and being asked, what should be done with their gods? Bid them leave them with the Tarentines; for what madness is it (as he adds) to hope for any safety from those that cannot preserve themselves? *Patrick's Commentary*.

† Josephus, in his account of this transaction, tells us, that Amaziah wrote an imperious letter to the king of Israel, "Commanding him and his people to pay the same allegiance to him that they had formerly paid to his ancestors, David and Solomon; or, in case of their refusal, to expect a decision of the matter by the sword." Others think that he intended no war by this message, but only a trial of military skill and prowess, or a civil kind of interview between his men and those of Israel; for, had he purposed to act in an hostile manner, he would have assaulted them on a sudden, and not given them this warning to stand upon their defence. The words of the message are, "Come, let us look one another in the face," 2 Kings xiv. 8. Much of the same kind with what Abner said to Joab, "Let the young men now arise and play before us," 2 Sam. ii. 14. But how polite soever the expressions may be, in both cases they had in them the formality of a challenge, as both the king and general (who were not unacquainted with military language) did certainly understand them. So that the truth of the matter seems to be this:—Amaziah, being encouraged by his late victory, determined to be revenged for the slaughter of his ancestors by Jehu,

2 Kings ix. and for the late spoil which the Israelites had made in his country; and thereupon resolving to have satisfaction, (but in a fair and honourable way) he sent them this open declaration of war, but conceived in as mild terms as any thing of that harsh nature could be. *Calmet's* and *Patrick's Commentaries*.

*² It was a custom among the oriental people to deliver their sentiments in parables, in which they made a great part of their wisdom to consist: And, considering the circumstances of the person he addressed to, who was a petty prince, flushed with a little good success, and thereupon impatient to enlarge his kingdom, no similitude could be better adapted than that of a thistle, a low contemptible shrub, but upon its having drawn blood of some traveller growing proud, and affecting an equality with the cedar, (a tall stately tree, that is the pride and ornament of the wood), till, in the midst of all its arrogance and presumption, it is unhappily trodden down by the beasts of the forests, 2 Kings xiv. 9. which Joash intimates would be Amaziah's fate, if he continued to provoke a prince of his superior power and strength. *Le Clerc's*, *Calmet's*, and *Patrick's Commentaries*.

*³ Josephus relates the defeat and captivity of Amaziah after this manner:—"No sooner were his men advanced within sight of the enemy, but they were instantly struck with such a panic, terror, and consternation, that they turned their backs, without striking a blow; and flying several ways, left Amaziah prisoner in the hand of his enemies, who refused to give him quarter upon any other terms than that the citizens of Jerusalem should set open their gates, and receive him and his victorious army into the town; which, between the pinch of necessity and the love of life, they were prevailed upon to do: So that Joash entered the town in his triumphal chariot, through a breach of three hundred cubits of the wall (that he had caused to be made) with his prisoner Amaziah marching before him." *Jewish Antiq.* lib. 9. c. 10.

†² These hostages were, in all probability, the great mens sons of the city, whom Joash took along with him, as a security that the kingdom of Judah should give him no farther molestation.

this respect, the city might lie open to his invasions, he broke down all the fortifications of the wall, from the gate of Ephraim to the corner gate, about four hundred cubits in length, and so † returned to Samaria.

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After this shameful defeat, Amaziah lived above fifteen years, but we read of nothing remarkable concerning him, save that, persisting still in his idolatry, he continued under God's displeasure, and at length fell under the contempt of his subjects; insomuch, that some of †² the inhabitants of Jerusalem formed a conspiracy against his life, which he having some intelligence of, endeavoured to escape by flying to Lachish, (a town on the frontiers of the Philistines), but all in vain: For the conspirators sent after him, and had him there privately murdered; which when his friends understood, they brought his corps (without any state or formality) to Jerusalem, where he was buried among his ancestors; and, after a reign of nine and twenty years, was succeeded [after an interregnum of eleven years] by his son Azariah, who in the book of Chronicles is called Uzziah. But to turn our thoughts now to the kingdom of Israel.

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In the beginning of the reign of Jehoash, king of Israel, (which was in the †³ thirty-seventh year of Joash, king of Judah), the prophet Elisha fell sick of a disease, whereof he died. The king of Israel upon this occasion came to visit him; and, having much †⁴ lamented the loss which all Israel would have by his death, he received his blessing, and dying counsel to wage war against the Syrians with all courage and bravery; giving him assurance, and, * by the emblem of a bow and arrows, making him sensible of the several victories which God had decreed that he should obtain.

This was the last prediction of Elisha that we read of, (for soon after this he died); but it was not the last miracle that we find he did: For, some time after his interment, a company of Israelites, as they were going to bury a dead person, perceiving a band of

† He never intended to make a thorough conquest of the kingdom of Judah, nor did he leave a garrison in Jerusalem; but, contenting himself with what spoil he could get, he made all convenient haste home, because he had work enough, at this time, upon his hands, to defend his territories against the daily invasions of the Syrians. *Patrick's Commentary.*

†² What provoked the people of Jerusalem, more than any other part of the nation, against their king, was their seeing their city spoiled of its best ornaments, exposed to reproach upon account of the great breach that was made in their wall, and several of their children carried away as hostages for their good behaviour; all which they imputed to their king's male-administration. Whereupon they entered into a conspiracy against him, which makes some commentators say, that he lived in a state of exile at Lachish, the space of twelve years, not daring to continue long in Jerusalem after the defeat which Joash had given him. But our learned Usher has placed this conspiracy in the last year of Amaziah's reign, as Jacobus Capellus (in his *Historia Sacra et Exotica*) supposes, that it was set on foot by the great men of Jerusalem, upon the specious pretence of being guardians to the young prince, and taking better care of him than his father was likely to do. *Patrick's* and *Calmet's Commentaries.*

†³ The Synarchies, or joint reigns of father and son, in those times, have rendered the chronology a little difficult, as it is in this case: For in 2 Kings xiii. 1. it is said, that Jehoahaz, king of Israel, began

to reign in the twenty-third year of Joash king of Judah, and reigned seventeen years: From whence it follows, that Jehoash began to reign, not in the thirty-seventh, but in the thirty-ninth or fortieth year of Joash king of Judah. But by this it only appears, that he reigned three of these years in conjunction with his father. *Howell's History* in the Notes, and *Patrick's Commentary.* [See likewise the Dissertation at the end of this Book.]

†⁴ His words are,—“My father! my father! the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof,” 2 Kings xiii. 14. which are the very same that Elisha used concerning his master Elijah, when he was taken up into heaven, 2 Kings ii. 12. signifying the great authority he had maintained among them, included in the word father, and the many glorious victories which he had obtained for them by the efficacy of his counsels and prayers. *Patrick's Commentary.*

* This was a symbolical action, whereby the prophet intended to represent the victories which he had promised the king of Israel against the Syrians, more fully and plainly to him. His shooting the first arrow eastward, or to that part of the country which the Syrians had taken from his ancestors, was a declaration of war against them for so doing; and his striking the other arrows against the ground, was an indication how many victories he was to obtain; but his stopping his hand too soon, denoted the imperfection of his conquests, which did not please the prophet so well, and for what reason, we shall see in the course of the objections. *Le Clerc's Commentary.*

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Moabites † making towards them, * put the corps for haste into Elisha's tomb, which, as soon as it had touched his body, †² immediately revived, so that the man stood upon his feet, and went home (no doubt) with the company. This miracle, which was a Divine confirmation of the truth of all Elisha's prophesies, could not fail of being a powerful means to encourage Jehoash in his engaging in war with the Syrians. Nor was his success less than the prediction; for, †³ in three pitched battles, he vanquished Benhadad, (his father Hazael being then dead), recovered all the cities that had been taken from his father Jehoahaz, and reunited them to the kingdom of Israel. After this he lived quiet from all enemies, until Amaziah, king of Judah, gave him the small disturbance we have spoken of: But after the victory which he gained over him, we hear no more of his appearing in the field, and may therefore conclude, that (after a reign of sixteen years) he died in peace, and was succeeded in his throne by his son Jeroboam.

In the fifteenth year of Amaziah, king of Judah, this Jeroboam, the second of that name, began to reign over Israel, and, by †⁴ the encouragement which the prophet Jonah

† These Moabites were not such a gang of robbers as sometimes infest our roads, but a regular body of men, well appointed, and under proper officers, to the number of a small army, who made incursions into the territories of Judah and Israel, generally at the beginning of the year, which is the season proper for armies to take the field; and therefore some have observed, that the month Nisan, which, with the Jews, is the first in their year, had its name from *Nisim*, which signifies the *engines of war* which were usually set up in that month; in like manner, as the month which we call March (and in part answers to the Jewish Nisan) had its name among the Romans from Mars, their god of war; because most nations at that time began their military expeditions. *Patrick's* and *Calmet's* Commentaries.

* The common places of burying among the Hebrews were in the fields, in caverns dug into a rock, with niches for the corps to be placed in, and, at the entrance of the sepulchre, there was an hewn stone, which might be removed or replaced without any damage to the tomb. The Jews (as Josephus informs us) gave Elisha a pompous and honourable interment, answerable to the dignity and merit of so great a prophet; but he does not tell us where the place of his sepulture was. Hereupon some have imagined, that he was carried to Abelmeholah, the place of his nativity, to be there interred among his ancestors. Others think, that he was at first buried on Mount Carmel, a favourite place of his, and afterwards removed to Samaria. Others again say, that he was buried at Nineveh; and, to this very day, the inhabitants shew his monument at Mosul, which was built, as they say, upon the very same spot where old Nineveh stood. But the most prevailing opinion, founded upon a constant tradition, is, that he was buried somewhere in the neighbourhood of Samaria, because there, in all appearance, he died. The tomb, however, that is usually shewn for his in that city, can be nothing more than the repository of his remains, since his original burying-place was certainly at some distance from it. *Jewish Antiq.* lib. ix. c. 9.

†² Josephus, in his account of this transaction, varies a little from the Sacred History: For, "it hap-

pened, after Elisha's burial, says he, that a traveller was killed upon the way by some thieves, and his body thrown into Elisha's monument, which, upon the bare touch of the prophet's corps, instantly revived." The Jewish doctors, who love to improve upon every miracle, tell us, that this person, whom they pretend to call Sellum, after he was revived, did presently die again, because he was a wicked man, and did not deserve to live long; never considering, that his hasty death afterwards was the ready way to impair the credit of the miracle, and make it indeed of no effect. However this may be, it is certain, that by this miracle (as we find it related in Scripture), God did the highest honour to his prophet, and confirmed the truth of what he had promised to the king of Israel, as well as the certainty of a future life; in which sense some part of the character which the author of *Ecclesiasticus*, chap. xlviii. 12, &c. gives him, may not improperly be understood. "Elisha was filled with Elijah's spirit; whilst he was not moved with the presence of any prince, neither could any bring him into subjection: no word could overcome him; and after his death his body prophesied: he did wonders in his life, and at his death were his works marvellous." *Jewish Antiq.* lib. ix. c. 9. and *Calmet's* Commentary.

†³ We have no particulars of the war between Jehoash and the Syrians, nor can we tell where these three battles were fought; but the success of them was so great, that the king of Israel not only retook all the places that had been lost in his own dominions, but repulsed the enemy into their own country, and there obtained a signal victory over them. *Patrick's* Commentary.

†⁴ The only mention we have of this prophet (whom the Jews will have to be the son of the widow of Zarephthah whom Elijah raised from the dead, but without any foundation of reason) is in this passage, and the account of his famous mission to Nineveh. What the prophecies were, whereby he encouraged Jeroboam to proclaim war against the king of Syria, we have nowhere recorded; but, as we have not every thing which the prophets did write, so several prophets, we must know, did not commit their predictions to writing. From this place, however, we may

gave him, proved successful in many military achievements. He recovered a large territory which several kings had taken from his predecessors, even all the country from Libanus on the north to the lake Asphaltites on the south; but especially on the east of Jordan, whereby he enlarged those conquests which his father Joash had made: And whereas Hamath and Damascus had, in the days of David and Solomon, been tributaries to the kings of Judah, but had now revolted from Israel, he conquered them again, and † made them pay homage to him, as they had formerly done to his predecessors. So that, after a long reign of †² one and forty years, wherein his arms were all along successful, he †³ died in much honour and renown, and was buried with his ancestors; but (whether it was through wars abroad, or through discord and dissention at home) he left the government in such confusion, that, after his decease, there was an interregnum for the space of two and twenty years.

From 1 Kings viii. to the end of 2 Chron.

During the time of this interregnum, Jonah, * the son of Amittai, who had prophesied before, in the time of Jeroboam, was now sent upon another errand. His commission was expressly to Nineveh, whither he was to go, and to exhort the inhabitants to repentance, because the "cry of their sins had reached heaven." But instead of obeying the Divine command, the Sacred History informs us, that he bent his course another way, and, intending to retire to Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, embarked at Joppa, *² a sea-

observe, that God was very merciful to the Israelites (though they were certainly a very wicked people) in continuing a race of prophets among them, even after Elisha was dead. *Patrick's Commentary.*

† Some are of opinion, that, when Jeroboam reconquered these two chief cities of Syria, he restored them to the kingdom of Judah, because they belonged to it of right, and reserved to himself only a small tribute to be paid him by way of acknowledgment. This is what the original Hebrew, as well as the Chaldee and Septuagint versions seem to favour: But the Syriac and Arabic translators have omitted the word Judah, and may therefore be supposed to think, (as several others do) that Jeroboam kept to himself all those places which he had recovered at his own hazard and expence. *Calmet's Commentary.*

†² This was much longer than any of the kings of Israel had reigned: For even Jehu himself, though his reign was longer than that of any who went before him, reigned but twenty-eight years; God having on purpose prolonged this prince's reign, because he was not minded to blot out the name of Israel from under heaven, but to save them by his hand, 2 Kings xiv. 27.

†³ The prophet Amos, who lived in the reign of this prince, was accused by Amaziah, the priest of Bethel, for prophesying that Jeroboam should die by the sword; but Amos never made any such prediction. It was a false accusation which this idolatrous priest sent against him, because he was desirous to have him removed out of the way, Amos vii. 10, &c.

* It is a very common opinion among the Jews, (as we said) that Jonah was the widow of Zarephthah's son; and this opinion they found upon the words of the mother, when she received her son alive from the prophet's hand: "By this I know, that the word of the Lord in thy mouth is truth," 1 Kings xvii. 24. for therefore, say they, was the child called the son of Amittai, because Amittai signifies *truth*; A weak reason God wot! and such as is plainly re-

pugnant to the testimony of Scripture. For this we know for certain, that Jonah lived in the reigns of Joash and Jeroboam the II^d, kings of Israel, and therefore could not be the widow of Zarephthah's son, since the former of these two princes did not begin to reign till sixty years after the translation of Elijah. Others pretend that he was son to the Shunamite woman, whom the prophet Elisha raised from the dead; but Shunan and Gath-hepher (where we are certain Jonah was born) were two quite different places, the former in the tribe of Issachar, the other in that of Zebulun; and therefore we may conclude, that Amittai was the proper name of Jonah's father, who lived in a little canton of the tribe of Zebulun, called Hopher or Hopher, wherein was the town of Gath, which is generally believed to be the same with Jotapata, so famous for the siege which Josephus, the Jewish historian, there maintained against the Roman army, a little before the destruction of Jerusalem. *Calmet's Preface sur Jonas, and his Dictionary under the word.*

*² Joppa is a sea-port town in Palestine, upon the Mediterranean, and was formerly the only port which the Jews had upon that coast, whither all the materials that were sent from Tyre towards the building of Solomon's temple were brought and landed. The town itself is very ancient, for profane authors reckon it was built before the flood, and derive the name of it from Joppa, the daughter of Eolus, and the wife of Cepheus, who was the founder of it. Others are rather inclined to believe that it was built by Japhet, and from him had the name of Japho, which was afterwards moulded into Joppa, but is now generally called Jaffa, which comes nearer to the first appellation. The town is situated in a fine plain, between Jamnia to the south, Cæsarea of Palestine to the north, and Rama or Ramula to the east, but at present is in a poor and mean condition; nor is its port by any means good, by reason of the rocks which project into the sea. The chief thing for which this place was

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port on the Mediterranean; that as soon as he had well got to sea, an unaccountable storm arose, which gave the mariners a suspicion that some great malefactor was got on board, upon whose account the heavens seemed so very angry; † that therefore, calling all the people together, they made them cast lots, in order to know who this guilty person was; that, when the lot fell upon Jonah, he freely owned that he was a Jew who worshipped the God of heaven, and not only a Jew, but a prophet likewise, who had been ordered to go to Nineveh, but was now endeavouring to flee from the Divine Presence; that since he found it was impossible to do that, and every one's life, upon his account, was in such imminent danger, he wished them to throw him over board, as the only way to appease the storm; that with some reluctancy †² the seamen did it, whereupon there immediately ensued a calm; which struck the people with such devotion, that they offered a sacrifice to the Lord, and made their vows; that, in the mean while, God had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah, in whose belly he continued for three days and three nights, and then, upon his supplications to heaven, was thrown out upon the shore; that, being thus wonderfully delivered, he disputed the Divine command no longer, but made the best of his way to Nineveh, which at that time was a very large city, and, having got into the heart of it, delivered his message, viz. that within forty days that city should be destroyed, with great boldness and intrepidity; that the people of Nineveh, believing this message to be sent from God, proclaimed a * most solemn fast, and from the highest to the lowest, putting on sack-

famous in ancient pagan history, is the exposition of Andromeda, the daughter of Cepheus king of Egypt, who, for her mother's pride, was bound to a rock, in order to be devoured by a sea-monster, but was delivered by the valour and bravery of Perseus, who afterwards married her: For, in the times of Mela and Pliny, there were some marks remaining (as they themselves testify, *Nempe Mela*, lib. i. c. 11. Pliny, lib. v. c. 13. Joseph. de Bello Jud. lib. iii. c. 15.) of the chains, wherewith this royal virgin was bound to the rock which projects into the sea. But all this is mere fiction, first founded upon the adventure of Jonah, who set sail from this port, and then improved with the accession of some particular circumstances. *Calmet's Commentary sur Jonas*, c. 1. v. 3.

† The Jewish doctors, who are great lovers of prodigies, are not even satisfied with what they meet with in this history of Jonah, but have over and above added, that as soon as the ship, wherein he was embarked, was under sail, it, all on a sudden, stood stock still, so that it could be made to move neither backward nor forward, notwithstanding all the pains that the mariners took in rowing: But others, with more probability, say, that while all the rest of the ships were quiet and unmolested, the storm fell upon none but that wherein Jonah was, which made the seamen think that there was something miraculous in it, and thereupon called upon the company that sailed with them, to come and cast lots (as the superstitious custom among the heathens was whenever they were in any great distress); that accordingly they cast lots three different times, which still fell upon Jonah; and that they let him down several times with a rope, without plunging him into the sea, and as often as they did it, found the storm abate, and whenever they pulled him up again, found it increase; so that, at last, they were forced to commit him to the mercy of the waves: All which are circumstances which

the Scripture account neither favours nor contradicts. *Calmet's Commentary*.

†² The people of the east have a tradition, that it was not above four leagues from Joppa, over-against Antipatris, that the seamen threw Jonah over-board.

* The history tells us, that "by a decree from the king and his nobles, neither man nor beast, neither herd nor flock, were allowed to taste any thing, but were kept up from feeding and drinking water," *Jonah* iii. 7. This was carrying their abstinence to a greater severity than what we find practised among the Jews. For though in times of public calamity, and on the day of solemn expiation, we find that they made their children fast, as we may gather from *Joel* ii. 16. yet we no where read of their extending that rigour to their cattle. Virgil indeed, in one of his Eclogues, brings in a shepherd, telling his companion, that for the death of Julius Cæsar, the mourning was so general, that even the sheep, and other creatures, were not driven to water.

Non ulli pastos illis egere diebus

Frigida, Daphni, boves ad flumina; nulla neque æm-nem

Libavit quadrupes, nec graminis attigit herbam.

Ecl. v.

But then the question is, whether this may not be looked upon as a poetical exaggeration? From Homer, and some other ancient authors, we learn, that when any hero, or great warrior died, the custom was to make his horses fast for some time, and to cut off part of their hair; nor may we forget mentioning, what some historians tell us, of the people inhabiting the Canaries and Peru, viz. that in times of great drought, they shut up their sheep and goats, without giving them any thing to eat, upon presumption that their loud cries and bleating will reach heaven, and prevail with God to give them rain. *Horn. de orig. Gent. Americ. lib. ii. c. 13.*

cloth, † and addressing their prayers to God, shewed such tokens of sorrow and repentance, that he reversed their doom, or at least deferred it for some years; that Jonah, being sore displeased at this, as fearing that it might bring some disgrace upon his prophetic office, after some expostulations with God, retired out of the city, and having built him a booth, sat under the cover of it, to see what the end would be; that, while he was here, God †² caused a gourd to spring hastily up, which, by its spreading leaves, so shaded his booth from the heat of the sun, that it pleased him much; but, being next morning gnawed by a worm, it withered away, which so fretted the impatient man, that he even desired to die; and that hereupon God took occasion to expostulate with him, and shew him the unreasonableness of his repining at the loss of a plant which cost him nothing, which rises in one night and dies in another, and yet having no concern or commiseration for the destruction of a populous city, wherein there were above an hundred and twenty thousand innocent babes, and consequently the number of all its inhabitants vastly large; and with this way of reasoning, (†³ we may suppose) he reconciled his prophet's wayward thoughts to this his merciful method of proceeding. But to return to the affairs of Judah.

From 1 Kings viii. to the end of 2 Chron.

After the murder of Amaziah at Lachish, Uzziah, (who is †⁴ likewise called Azariah) in the sixteenth year of his age, (|| which was in the seven and twentieth year of the

† The text tells us of the king of Nineveh, that upon the preaching of Jonah, "he laid his robe from him, and covered him with sackcloth, and sat in ashes" Jonah iii. 6. and (what is pretty strange) some have thought, that the king thus penitent upon this occasion was Sardanapalus, a man famous among heathen authors for his luxury and riches, and in whose reign the famous city of Nineveh was taken by Arbaces and Belesis. But others, with more probability, suppose, that it was Pul, the father of this Sardanapalus, whom some heathen authors call Anabaxarus, and others Anacyndaraxus. For, as he died (according to Usher) about the year of the world 3237, he might be upon the throne in the reign of Jeroboam the II. king of Israel, which was the time when Jonah was sent to Nineveh. *Calmet's Commentary*, and *Usher ad A. M. 3254*.

†² The word *Kikajon*, by the Septuagint, Arabic, and Syriac versions, is called a *gourd*; but most of the ancient Greek translators, following St Jerom in this particular, chuse rather to render it *ivy*. St Jerom, however, acknowledges, that the word *ivy* does not answer the signification of the Hebrew *Kikajon*, though he thinks it much better in this place than a *gourd*, which, growing close to the earth, could not have shaded Jonah from the heat of the sun; for the *Kikajon*, according to him, is a shrub which grows in the sandy places of Palestine, and increases so suddenly, that in a few days it comes to a considerable height. It is supported by its trunk, without being upheld by any thing else; and by the thickness of its leaves, which resemble those of a vine, affords, in hot weather, a very agreeable shade. *Calmet's Dictionary*, under the word *Kikajon*.

†³ The book of Jonah ends as abruptly as it begins: It begins with a conjunctive copulative, "And the word of the Lord came upon Jonah," (so it should be read) which has made some commentators think, that it was but an appendix to some of his other writings; and it ends without giving us any manner of

account, either what became of the Ninevites, or of Jonah himself, after this expedition. It is likely indeed, from the compassionate expressions which God makes use of towards the Ninevites, that, for that time, he reversed their doom; and it is not improbable that Jonah, when he had executed his commission, and being satisfied by God concerning his merciful procedure, returned into Judea; but the author of the lives and death of the prophets (who goes under the name of Epiphanius) tells us, that, returning from Nineveh, and being ashamed to see that his prediction was not fulfilled, he retired with his mother to the city of Tyre, where he lived in the plain of Sear until he died, and was buried in the cave of Cenezeus, judge of Israel; but who the author means by Cenezeus, unless it be Caleb, who is frequently surnamed the Kenezite (though we do not read of his being ever a judge of Israel), or rather Othniel, who was the son of Kenaz, and one that judged Israel, we cannot tell. *Calmet's Dictionary* under the word *Jonah*, and *Howell's History* in the Notes.

†⁴ The words are much of the same signification; for the former signifies the strength, and the other the help of God.

|| Commentators have been at a good deal of trouble to reconcile a seeming contradiction in this computation. For if Amaziah, the father of Azariah, lived but fifteen years after the beginning of Jeroboam's reign, (as appears from 2 Kings xiv. 17.) then Azariah must begin his reign, not in the twenty-seventh, but (if he succeeded his father immediately) in the sixteenth, or fifteenth rather, of Jeroboam: But our learned Dr Lightfoot solves this at once, by supposing that there was an interregnum, wherein the throne was vacant eleven, or rather twelve years, between the death of Amaziah and the inauguration of his son Azariah, who, being left an infant of four years old when his father died, was committed to the guardianship of the grandees of the nation, who, during his minority, took the administration of public

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reign of Jeroboam king of Israel) succeeded his father, and in the former part of his reign behaved well; for which God prospered him in all his undertakings, and blessed his arms with great success: For he worsted the Philistines in many battles, dismantled several of their towns, and built cities in the country thereabout to keep them in subjection. His next expedition was against the Arabians, that were upon the borders of Egypt, and against the Mehunims, (who lived in their deserts) whom he utterly subdued; and not long after so terrified the Ammonites, that they (as the others were) became tributaries to him. He then repaired the walls of Jerusalem, and, at proper distances, built towers, from whence, * with engines that threw darts and stones, he might be able to annoy an invader; and, as he was a great lover of husbandry, he employed several plowers and planters in the plains, vine-dressers on the mountains, and shepherds in the valleys, whereby he acquired considerable wealth. But the chief glory of his kingdom lay in his army, which consisted of above three hundred and seventy thousand select men, under the command of two thousand brave experienced officers, all armed with proper weapons both offensive and defensive, and trained up in the most perfect manner of martial discipline.

Thus prosperous was Uzziah in every circumstance of life, † while Zechariah lived, and had him under his direction; but when once that faithful counsellor died, (which was in the three and thirtieth year of his reign) he soon grew so *² intoxicated with the thoughts of his power and greatness, that, forgetting himself, he would needs intrude into the priestly office. Accordingly, having taken it into his head one day to *³ offer incense, he went into the sanctuary; and when Ahaziah, and some other of the

affairs upon themselves, and when he was become sixteen, devolved it upon him; so that, when he came into the full possession of the throne, it was in the seven and twentieth year of Jeroboam. *Patrick's Commentary.*

* This is the first time that we read of any machine, either for besieging or defending towns; which is plainly the reason why sieges were of so long a continuance before the invention of these. Homer, who is the most ancient Greek writer we know of that treats of sieges, describes a kind of intrenchment, (though a poor one) some lines of circumvallation, and a ditch with pallisades; but we hear not one word of any machines, such as the ballistæ and the catapultæ, which were used for hurling stones and throwing darts; and therefore we need less wonder that the famous siege of Troy continued so long. Sardanapalus king of Assyria maintained himself in Nineveh for seven years, because the besiegers (as Diodorus observes, lib. ii.) wanted such engines as were fit for demolishing and taking of cities, they being not then invented. Salmanaizer lay three years before Samaria, 2 Kings xvii. 5, 6. and, as some say, Psammiticus (Vid. Aristeas, de LXX Interp.) twenty before Azoth. Now of Uzziah it is said, "that he made in Jerusalem engines, invented by cunning men, to be on towers, and upon the bulwarks, to shoot arrows and great stones," 2 Chron. xxvi. 15. so that it must needs be a mistake, to attribute the invention of the ballista, the scorpiæ, or the onager, whereof Ammianus Marcellinus, lib. xxiii. c. 2. has given us the descriptions, to the Greeks or Romans, because we find them made use of in the east, before ever the Grecians had brought the military art to any great perfection. Uzziah was certainly the first inventor of them; and

therefore it is said, that for these, and other warlike preparations, his name was spread abroad. From this time they began to be employed both in attacking and defending towns; and therefore, we find the prophet Ezekiel describing the future sieges of Jerusalem and Tyre, where he makes mention of battering-rams, and engines of war. or (as it should be rendered) machines of cords, which in all probability were what later ages called their ballistæ and catapultæ. *Calmet's Distert. sur la milice des anciens Hebreux.*

† Some are of opinion, that the person here mentioned was a prophet, and the same with that Zechariah, whose book of propheties is extant in the Bible; but as he wrote in the reign of Darius, it is plain that he lived almost three hundred years after this. It is not unlikely, however, that he was the son of that Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada, who by the command of king Joash was slain in the temple; that he was called after his father's name; was preceptor to Uzziah; and (though not a prophet) a man very skilful in expounding the ancient propheties, and giving instructions out of them, as Grotius understands it. *Patrick's and Calmet's Commentaries.*

*² How hard a matter is it (says Bishop Patrick hereupon) to bear great prosperity with moderation and humble thankfulness!

*³ What it was that tempted the king to this extravagant folly it is hard to imagine; but the most likely conjecture is, that he had a vain ambition to imitate heathen princes, who, in several countries, joined both the regal and sacerdotal offices together. But however it may be in all other countries, the priesthood in Judea was confined to the house of Aaron only, and every one that pretended to usurp that office was, by the law of the land, to be put to death:

priests, endeavoured to dissuade him from it, he fell into a rage, and received their remonstrances with threats. God however took care to vindicate the sacredness of the sacerdotal office: For the moment that he took the censer in his hand, and was going to burn incense, he was * struck with a leprosy, which no art of man could ever after cure; so that, while his son Jotham (as his father's viceroy) took the public administration upon him, he was forced to live in a separate place by himself; and, after a reign of two and fifty years, died, and was buried, not in the royal sepulchres, but *² in the same field, at some distance from them, because he was a leper, and was succeeded by his son Jotham.

From 1 Kings
viii. to the end
of 2 Chron.

During the reign of this Uzziah, there happened some events mentioned in other parts of Scripture, which are not to be found in the books that are purely historical. Such are that terrible earthquake whereof Amos (*a*) prophesied two years before it happened; that sore plague of the locusts, whereof Joel (*b*) gives us so full and lively a description; and that extreme drought, mixed with fearful flashes of fire, which fell from heaven, and (as the prophet (*c*) expresses it) "devoured all the pastures of the wilderness, and burnt up all the trees of the field"

But that which we are chiefly concerned to take notice of is the succession of prophets in Israel and Judah, whom God raised up to give them instructions and exhortations, and to denounce his threatenings and judgments against them, upon their persisting in their impieties: And these he appointed, not only to warn them by word of mouth, (as his former prophets had done), but to commit their admonitions to writing, that posterity might see the ingratitude of his people, and all other nations, from their backslidings and punishments, might learn not to do so wickedly.

The first of these prophets was Hosea, the son of Beeri, who, according to the introduction to his book, prophesied in the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the second king of Israel; and consequently continued to be a prophet at least seventy years, unless we may suppose (as (*d*) some

"for thou, and thy sons with thee (says God to Aaron) shall keep thy priest's office, for every thing of the altar, and within the veil, and ye shall serve. I have given your priest's office unto you as a service of gift, and the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death," Numb. xviii. 7.

* The punishment for such as would intrude into Divine ministrations, was capital we see; and therefore God smote Uzziah with such a disease as was a kind of death; because it separated the person that was afflicted with it from the commerce and society of men, even as if he were departed this world, and (as the Psalmist expresses it) become free among the dead, Psal. lxxxviii. 5. But besides the infliction of this disease, Josephus tells us, "That the very moment that Uzziah was going to burn incense, there happened a terrible earthquake, and as the roof of the temple opened with the shock of it, there passed a beam of the sun through the cleft, which struck directly upon the face of this sacrilegious prince, whereupon he instantly became a leper: nay, that this earthquake was so very violent, that it tore asunder a great mountain, towards the west of Jerusalem, and rolled one half of it over and over a matter of four furlongs, till at length it was stopped by another mountain which stood over against it, but choaked up the highway, and covered the king's gardens all over with dust." But all this may be justly suspected. That there was a great earthquake in the

reign of Uzziah, is evident from the testimony of two prophets, Amos i. 1. and Zechariah xiv. 8. but that it happened exactly when Uzziah attempted this invasion of the priesthood is far from being clear: On the contrary, if we will abide by Bishop Usher's computation, the Jewish historian must be sadly mistaken. For since the prophet Amos tells us, that he began to prophesy two years before this earthquake happened, in the reigns of Uzziah king of Judah, and Jeroboam the II^d, king of Israel; and since we may gather from the sacred history, that Jeroboam died two years before the birth of Jotham the son of Uzziah; that Jeroboam died in the six and twentieth year of the said Uzziah, and Jotham his son was born in the three and twentieth year thereof, and yet was of age sufficient to be made regent of the kingdom, when his father was thus struck with a leprosy, (which must have been several years after Jeroboam's death) it must needs follow, that this earthquake could not happen at the time which Josephus assigns, but must have been much later. *Josephus's Jewish Wars*, lib. ix. c. 11. and *Calmet's Commentary* on 2 Chron. xv. 5.

*² Josephus will needs have it, that his body was buried in his garden, in a monument by itself, forgetting very probably what he told us before, that these gardens at this time were covered all over with rubbish. *Ibid*.

(*a*) Chap. i. 1. (*b*) Chap. ii. 2. &c. (*c*) Joel i. 18.

(*d*) *Calmet's Dictionary*, under the word *Hosea*.

A. M. 3001,
&c. or 4654.
Ant. Chris.
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have done), that this is a spurious title of some ancient transcribers, and that the true beginning of his work is at the second verse, "the beginning of the word of the Lord by Hosea." However this be, we may observe, that he speaks positively of the captivity of the ten tribes, and inveighs strongly against their disorders; that he foretels, that the kingdom of Judah should for some time subsist after them, but that at length they too should be carried away captive beyond the Euphrates; and, through the whole, lays open the sins, and declares the judgments of God against a people hardened and irreclaimable.

The next prophet is Joel, the son of Pethuel. He mentions the same judgments that Amos does; and under the idea of an enemy's army, represents those vast swarms of locusts which, in his time, fell upon Judea. and occasioned great desolation. He calls and invites the people to repentance, and promises mercy and forgiveness to those that will listen to the call. He speaks of the teacher of righteousness whom God was to send, and of the holy Spirit which he was to pour out upon all flesh; and in the conclusion, relates what glorious things God would do for his church in the times of the Gospel.

The next prophet is Amos; for he lived in the days of Uzziah king of Judah, and of Jeroboam the II^d, king of Israel. He begins his prophecies with threatenings against the neighbouring nations that were enemies to Israel; then reproves the people of Israel and Judah for their idolatry, effeminacy, and other sins; exhorts them to repentance, without which their hypocritical services will do them no good; foretels their captivity, and other heavy judgments of God; and at last speaks of the restoration of the church among the Jews, and the happy accession of the Gentiles.

The next prophet is Obadiah; for he was contemporary with Hosea, Joel, and Amos. He denounces God's judgments against the Edomites for the mischiefs they had done to Judah and Jerusalem, whom he promises that they should be victorious over these Edomites, and their other enemies; and at last foretels their reformation and restoration, and that the kingdom of the Messiah should be set up by the bringing in of a great salvation.

The book of Jonah is an history rather than a prophecy; and if it was written by himself, it is a frank acknowledgment of his own faults and failings, and a plain evidence, that in this work he designed God's glory, and not his own. For it contains remarkable instances of human frailties in the prophet, of God's compassion and condescension to him, and a noble type of our Saviour's burial and resurrection.

The other prophet that lived in these times was Isaiah the son of Amos, whose prophecies may be divided into three parts. The first part includes six chapters relating to the reign of Jotham, the six following chapters relate to the reign of Ahaz, and all the rest to the reign of Hezekiah. The great design of what he does is to foretel the captivity of Babylon, the return of the people from that captivity, and the flourishing kingdom of the Messiah: but * the whole book is highly serviceable to the church of God in all ages for conviction of sin, direction in duty, and consolation in trouble; and its author may justly be accounted a great prophet, whether we consider the extent and variety of his predictions; the sublimity of the truths which he reveals; *² the

* St Jerom, in his introduction to Isaiah's prophecy, tells us, that his writings are, as it were, an abridgment of the holy Scriptures, and a collection of all the most uncommon knowledge that the mind of man is capable of. "Quid loquar (as his words are) de physicâ, et theologicâ? quicquid sanctarum est Scripturarum, quicquid potest humana lingua proferre, et mortalium sensus accipere, isto volumine continetur. Hieron. præfat. in Isaiah.

*² Grotius compares this prophet with the great

Grecian orator Demosthenes; for in him, says he, we meet with all the purity of the Hebrew tongue, as in the other there is all the delicacy of the Attick taste. Both are sublime and magnificent in their style, vehement in their emotions, copious in their figures, and very impetuous when they set off things of an enormous nature, or such as are grievous or odious: But there is one thing wherein the prophet was superior to the orator, and that is, in the honour of his illustrious birth, and relation to the royal family of

majesty and elegance of his style; the loftiness of his metaphors, or the liveliness of his descriptions.

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THE OBJECTION.

“**BUT** how highly soever we may think fit to commend the prophet Isaiah, others there are that appear upon the stage in this period of time, whose conduct we have reason to censure, as not so well comporting with their sacred character. Lying and dissimulation was certainly a sin under the law as well as under the gospel; nor had the greatest prophet, by virtue of his call, an exemption from speaking truth any more than the meanest man in Israel; and yet we find no less a man than Elisha telling the soldiers (*a*), who were sent to apprehend him, a parcel of lies, that they were out of their way, had mistaken their road, and were come to the wrong place; but that, if they would commit themselves to his conduct, he would be sure to carry them to the man whom they wanted: Which they, poor creatures, being now smitten with blindness, were glad to accept of, and so, by the wiles and deceptions of this man of God, were unhappily drawn into a snare.

Nay, so great a propensity had this prophet to the common art of falsehood and dissimulation, that (*b*) when the king of Syria sent to him in a friendly manner, and with a large present even tempted him to tell him the truth, concerning the event of his sickness, we find him still prevaricating; returning a fallacious answer to the king, and at the same time telling Hazael another story, which might probably at this time put him in the thoughts of ascending the throne of Syria (to *c*) which he had been anointed before by the prophet Elijah) by the immediate murder of his master.

Whether it is that prophets looked upon themselves as superior to kings, or, in virtue of their office, claimed a dispensation from the common forms of civility, but so it was, that this same Elisha (*d*), when Joash, king of Israel, did him the honour of a visit in his sickness, flew into a passion with him, for no other reason but the senseless trifle of not striking with an arrow upon the ground as oft as he would have had him: Nor can we account why the high priest Jehoiada, who (as to secular matters) was no more than a private man, should take upon him to place Jehoash upon the throne of Judah, without the general consent of all the states of the kingdom, unless we may suppose that he affected the regency during the minority of the prince, and, upon that account, was as assuming in his way as if he had been a prophet.

These priests and prophets then (we may say with the apostle) ‘were men of the like passions as we are;’ but then it is to be hoped that they died in charity, unless we may except the prophet Zechariah, who, in suffering martyrdom, called upon God (*e*) to avenge his death, as did not St Stephen, who, when he was expiring, knelt down and prayed for his murderers, (*f*) ‘Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.’

Jehu, in his time, was certainly the minister of God to execute wrath upon the house of Ahab; but then we know very well that the ends of Divine Providence are not to be served by any indirect means, nor can lying and dissimulation, in any sense,

Judah; and therefore what Quintilian says of Corvinus Messala, may be justly applied to him, viz that he

speaks in an easy flowing manner, and in a style, which shews him to be a man of quality. *Grotius* on

2 Kings xix. 2. and *Quintil.* lib. x. c. 20.

(*a*) 2 Kings vi. 19, &c.

(*b*) *Ibid.* viii. 8. &c.

(*c*) 1 Kings xix. 15.

(*d*) 2 Kings xiii. 14. &c.

(*e*) 2 Chron. xxiv. 22.

(*f*) Acts vii. 60.

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be proper expedients to accomplish his designs; and yet we find this same Jehu transcending his commission, and (a) falling upon Ahaziah, king of Judah, (where he was slain it is not agreed), for no other reason but because he happened to be in the king of Israel's company. We find him, (b) under the pretence of a greater zeal for idol-worship than ever Ahab had, drawing all the priests and worshippers of Baal, like so many lame cattle into a penfold, and there slaughtering them: Though how they came to pay any regard to his proclamation, who had made already (c) such havock among them, or how the temple of this false god should be able to contain all its worshippers, whom the connivance of the law, and countenance of the court, had made so-numerous, we cannot well imagine. Nay, we find him calling upon Jehonadab, the son of Rechab, to be a witness (d) 'of his zeal for the Lord,' and yet this vile reformer of others continues in the worship of the golden calves, which were objects not much better than the images of Baal; and though he will not depart from the sin of Jeroboam, who made Israel to sin, receives this commendation from God himself, (e) 'Because thou hast done well, in executing that which was right in mine eyes, therefore thy children of the fourth generation shall sit on the throne of Israel.'

Wicked princes are by principle enemies to good men; but why Jehoram, king of Israel, should be for taking away the life of the prophet Elisha, who had been so very serviceable to him in his wars against Syria, and that for no other reason but because Samaria was besieged and reduced to the last extremity of famine, (as if it had been in the prophet's power either to make the enemy's army withdraw, or (f) 'to open windows in heaven,' and make it rain corn as it once did manna) is beyond our conception.

But of all the characters that appear upon the stage in this period of time, the most unaccountable is that of Jonah, a sad, testy, splenetic creature, who, upon every turn, is growing angry with God, and if he has not his will in every thing, wishing to die; who repines at Providence, because (g) 'it is slow to anger, and of great kindness,' and had rather see the whole city of Nineveh laid in Ashes than that one tittle of his prophecy should be unaccomplished. And therefore, if God foresaw, that upon the Ninevites repentance his comminations would be null, a person of another cast had been a proper messenger, since all he had to carry was but a short admonition; which, before he had gone half through so large a city, was in danger of becoming a thread-bare story."

ANSWER. ST PAUL, speaking of the propagation of the gospel, and the seeming insufficiency of the means which God had employed to effect it, has these remarkable words:—(h) "Ye see your calling, brethren, how not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called; but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, the weak things of the world to confound the mighty, the base things of the world, and things that are despised, yea, and things that are not, to bring to nought things that are, that no flesh should glory in his presence:" And then proceeding to speak of himself; (i) "And I, brethren, says he, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech, or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God; but was with you in weakness, and fear, and in much trembling; and my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power; that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God."

Now if God, in the conversion of the world to Christianity, made use of instruments,

(a) 2 Kings ix. 27.
(e) Ibid. ver. 30.
(i) Ibid. ii. 1, &c.

(b) Ibid. x. 18.
(f) Ibid. chap. vii. 2.

(c) Ibid. ver. 17.
(g) Jonah iv. 2.

(d) Ibid. ver. 15, 16.
(h) 1 Cor. i. 26, &c.

in themselves so incompetent for the work, lest the work might be imputed to human powers; by parity of reason we may presume, that, in the conversion of the Ninevites, God might not employ a prophet of the best natural temper and qualifications, (since Isaiah was then of age, and seems to have been better fitted for such a mission, that the glory of the event might not be ascribed to any innate abilities of the prophet, but to the sole power of God which accompanied him, and (a) “made the foolishness of his preaching (as the apostle expresses it) effectual to save them that believed.” [There is indeed reason to believe that Jonah himself was one of those who halted between two opinions, worshipping sometimes the true God, and sometimes one or other of the false gods whom the house of Ahab had introduced into Israel. If this was the case, he was employed, and indeed compelled, against his own will, to go and preach in the name of Jehovah to the Ninevites, as well for his own conversion and the conversion of his countrymen, as to reclaim the king and people of Nineveh from the iniquity of their ways. In this respect his preaching was much fitter for the people to whom he was sent, and indeed to accomplish the various purposes which it was intended to serve, than the preaching of Isaiah, or any other prophet, uniformly zealous for the Mosaic law, could have been. It was, like the prophecies uttered by Balaam—a priest of Baal-Peor, and like the miracles wrought by Moses in Egypt, a triumph over the gods of Nineveh and the idolatrous Israelites, and a triumph obtained by the instrumentality of a worshipper of those gods (b).]

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We must not imagine, however, that, in his address to the people of Nineveh, the prophet had nothing to say but this one sentence, “Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown.” This indeed was the sum and substance of his preaching; but we may well presume, that he took frequent occasions to expatiate upon it, by reminding them of the number, and nature, and several aggravations of their offences; by acquainting them with the holiness, justice, and omnipotence of God; that holiness which could not behold iniquity without detestation; that justice which sooner or later would not suffer it to go unpunished; and that Almighty Power, which could in a moment lay the stateliest cities in ashes; by exhorting them to repentance, from a dread of his impending judgments, and by instructing them in the method of pacifying his wrath, and effecting a reconciliation with him.

Some of the ancients are of opinion, that Jonah received no orders from God to limit the destruction of Nineveh to forty days, because there is no such time fixed in his instructions; all that God appoints him to do is, (c) “to go unto Nineveh, that great city,” (as he calls it) “and to preach unto it that preaching which he should bid him:” and therefore they suppose, that the space of forty days was an addition of the prophet’s own, and, for that reason, not exactly fulfilled; but there is no occasion for charging him with any such falsification, since the comminations of God are always conditional, and answer his gracious purposes much better when they are averted than when they are executed.

And indeed, though in this case they were averted for a while, yet, when the people relapsed into their former iniquities, the prophet’s prediction did not fail of its accomplishment. For if we take the forty days to denote forty years, a day for a year, and the overthrowing of Nineveh, not to signify its final destruction, but only the subversion (d) of that ancient empire of the Assyrians, which had governed Asia for above thirteen hundred years, and was destroyed under the effeminate king Sardanapalus; then was the prophecy literally fulfilled, and from its fulfilling we may trace the time of Jonah’s mission.

But though this prophecy of Jonah was not fulfilled at the end of forty days, as he

(a) 1 Cor. i. 21.

(b) See the Appendix to the ensuing Dissertation.

(c) Jonah iii. 2.

(d) *Prideaux’s* Connection, at the beginning.

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expected, and, at the end of forty years, there was only a destruction of the monarchy, and not of the city; yet his miraculous preservation in the whale's belly gave him such credit, that it was always believed, though the time of its accomplishment was uncertain. To this purpose we find Tobit (*a*) giving his son Tobias instructions to depart out of Nineveh, "because those things which the prophet Jonah spake should certainly come to pass:" and accordingly, "before Tobias died, he heard of the destruction of Nineveh, which was taken by Nabuchodonosor and Assuerus;" (*b*) for these two princes, being related by marriage, entered into a confederacy against the Assyrians, and, joining their forces together, besieged this city, and, after having taken it, and slain Saracus, the king thereof, they utterly destroyed it, and from that time made Babylon the place of royal residence, and the sole metropolis of the Assyrian monarchy. Thus was the prediction of Jonah concerning the destruction of Nineveh (though not in the time which he had prefixed) fulfilled; nor can the delay of it be looked upon as any breach of the Divine veracity, whatever uneasiness it gave the prophet. The truth of the matter is,—Jonah was a man of an unhappy temper, peevish, and passionate, and, in this case, fearful of being accounted a false prophet, of having his ministry exposed to contempt, or his person perhaps to violence from the Ninevites, because the event did not answer the prediction. And the proper lesson we are to learn from his behaviour is,—that the gift of prophesy does not alter mens natural tempers, nor set them above the level of human frailty. For (*c*) "we have this treasure" (as the apostle speaks) "in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us."

That stratagems in war, and other artifices to delude and ensnare an enemy, are not prohibited by the law of God, the generality of casuists are agreed; and therefore, upon the supposition that Elisha's speech to Benhadad's men was framed on purpose to deceive, he did no more than make use of the common privilege, which every nation, engaged in war with another, is permitted to employ; but, upon a nearer examination, we cannot charge his words with a direct falsehood, though we must allow that there is some ambiguity in them.

When the prophet perceived that the Syrian army had encompassed the place where he abode, he went out of the city, and told them, (*d*) "This is not the way, neither is this the city," viz. where they would find the man for whom they were sent; because, at that time, he was come out of the city, and therefore, if they proceeded in their march, they would be sure to miss him. But "follow me, and I will bring ye to the man whom ye seek;" and so he did, but not in the manner, it must be owned, that they either expected or desired. The whole conduct of the prophet therefore, in this respect, was no more than what the practice of war always allows, viz. a feint to cover his real designs, and, by counterfeit motions, and false alarms, to draw the enemy into such intricacies, that he might come upon them, and surprise them, when they least of all thought of it.

The formality of a lie (as some will have it) does not consist so much in saying what is untrue, as in making a false representation of things with a purpose to do hurt: but the prophet's generous treatment of the enemy, when he had them at his mercy, shews, that he had no malignity in his intention, no design to make an advantage of their deception, but, on the contrary, took the most effectual means, both to cure their inveterate hatred against the Israelites, and to reconcile them to the worship and service of the true God, who had wrought such a miracle for their conviction, as well as the preservation of his prophet.

(*e*) "He smote them with blindness, according to the word of Elisha:" but then we are not to imagine, that this blindness was so total that they quite lost the use of their

(*a*) Tobit xiv. 8, &c.
(*d*) 2 Kings vi. 19.

(*b*) *Prideaux's Connection*, Anno 613.
(*e*) *Ibid.* ver. 18.

(*c*) 2 Cor. iv. 7.

eyes, but only that it was such a dimness, and confusion in their sight, as hindered them from distinguishing one object from another, the city of Dothan, for instance, from the city of Samaria; even, in like manner, as we read of the people of Sodom, that when the angels (a) “smote them with blindness,” (which they might easily do by some small alteration either in their sight or in the air) “they wearied themselves to find out Lot’s door.” They saw the house, it seems, but did not discern the door, because this sudden disorder in their imagination might either make the door appear to them like the solid wall, or the solid wall like so many doors.

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This is no more than what happens to several men in their liquor; that, though their eyes be open, and can perceive the several objects that surround them, yet they cannot discern wherein they differ; and, if we may suppose that the Syrian army was under the like *ἀσασία*, (as the Greeks very happily term it) we need no longer wonder, that they readily accepted of a guide, who offered his service, and bespoke them fair, (whom they might indeed take for some deputy of the town, with authority to deliver up the prophet to them) than that a drunkard, who, after a long while having lost his way, and found himself bewildered, should be thankful to any hand that would promise to conduct him safe home.

(b) That Hazael was never, in a strict sense, anointed by Elijah to be Benhadad’s successor, is evident from what appears of him in Sacred History; for when he came to consult Elisha concerning his master’s illness, (which was a considerable while after the prophet Elijah’s translation) we find, by the whole interview, that he was entirely ignorant of his own designation for the throne of Syria, which he could not have been, had he been anointed before this time. Either therefore we must take the word in a figurative sense, to denote no more than God’s purpose, or determination, that Hazael should succeed in the throne of Syria, to execute the designs of his Providence upon the people of Israel, even as Cyrus, for the same reason, is called (c) the Lord’s anointed, though he was never properly anointed by God; or, if we take it in a literal sense, we must suppose some reason why Elijah waved the execution of that command, even because he foresaw the many sore calamities which Hazael, when advanced to the crown of Syria, would bring upon Israel, and thereupon prevailed with God, that he might be excused from that ungrateful office, and that, in his time at least, a succession, which would be attended with such direful consequences, might not commence.

It may possibly be thought, indeed, that Elisha’s foretelling his advancement to the throne might be a spur and incitement to his ambition; but the means whereby he accomplished his design were entirely from his own wicked and corrupt mind, which would not stay for the ordinary methods of Divine Providence to bring it innocently about, but chose rather to carve for himself, and, by murdering his master, to cut him out a more compendious way of coming into immediate possession. And this solves the seeming difficulty of the prophet’s sending one answer to Benhadad, and telling Hazael quite another story: for when Hazael understood that his master’s disease was not mortal, but that, if no violence intervened, he might easily get over that indisposition (for that is the sense of (d) “he may certainly recover”), and, at the same time, was told by the prophet, that he would not however recover, because he foresaw that violence would be used to take away his life (as this is the sense of “he shall surely die”), Hazael went his way, and, not willing to trust Providence with his master’s recovery, took care the next morning to have him dispatched.

There is however another, and, as some think, a much plainer interpretation of the prophet’s words: For, since this is a passage which admits of a various lection, the adverb *lo* (as it is in the textual reading) signifies *not*, but in our translation (which in this

(a) Gen. xix. 11.
part ii.

(b) *Le Clerc’s* Commentary on 1 Kings xix. 15. and Scripture Vindicated,
(c) Isaiah xlv. 1.

(d) 2 Kings viii. 10.

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place follows the marginal) it is rendered *to him*: So that, if the Hebrew text be right (as some learned men, upon examination, have given it the preference), the plain reading of the words will be, "Go say, thou shalt surely not live; for the Lord hath shewed me that thou shalt surely die." This was the sense of the prophet's answer to Benhadad; but Hazael, who was a wicked man, went and told him a quite contrary thing, on purpose to lull him into a state of security, that thereby he might have a fairer opportunity of accomplishing his design upon him.

Thus, whether the marginal or textual reading be right, and consequently, whether the prophet's message to Benhadad be taken in an affirmative or negative sense, he cannot justly be charged with baseness and ingratitude; since, whether he accepted of his present or no, it is manifest that he could not return him any false and delusive answer: And yet the more probable opinion is, that, in conformity to his practice, in the case of Naaman the leper, he did, upon this occasion, reject the good things of Damascus which Benhadad sent, because the same reasons which induced him to refuse them from the hand of Naaman were still in force, and might equally prevail with him not to accept them from the hand of Hazael.

Thus, with regard to Benhadad king of Syria, the prophet stands clear of any imputation of falsehood or ingratitude; and in like manner, if we consider the matter as it stood between him and Joash king of Israel, we shall find no unbecoming passion or peevishness in his conduct, but a great deal of zeal and concern for the honour both of his king and country. For, whether king Joash, before this interview with Elisha, was acquainted or not with the nature of parabolical actions, whereby prophets more especially were accustomed to represent future events; by the comment which Elisha made upon the first arrow that he shot (which he calls (*a*) "the arrow of deliverance from Syria"), he could not but perceive, that this was a symbolical action, and intended to prefigure his victories over that nation; and therefore, as the first action of shooting was a kind of prelude to the war, he could not but understand farther (even though the prophet had said nothing to him), that this second action of striking the ground with the arrow, was to portend the number of the victories he was to obtain. (*b*) But then, if we may suppose with the generality of interpreters, that the prophet had apprized him before hand, that such was the symbolical intent of what he now put him upon; that the oftener he smote upon the ground, the more would their victories be which his arms should obtain; that this was the decree of heaven, and that thus, in some measure, his success in war was put in his own power; the king's conduct was utterly inexcusable, if, diffident of the prophet's promise, and considering the vast strength of the king's of Syria more than the power of God that was engaged on his side, he stopped his hand after he had smote thrice; supposing, indeed, that the prediction would never have been fulfilled, had he gone on, and smote upon the earth oftener. Upon the whole, therefore, the prophet had just reason to be offended at the king for not believing God, who had done so many signal miracles in favour of the Israelites; for not believing him, who, according to his own acknowledgment, had been a constant defender of the state, (*c*) "the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof," and now, in his dying hours, was full of good wishes and intentions for his country; and, by this unbelief of his, for eclipsing the glory of his own arms, and curtailing the number of his victories: For (*d*) "thou shouldest have smitten five or six times (says the prophet to the king), then shouldest thou have smitten Syria till thou hadst consumed it, whereas now thou shalt smite Syria but thrice."

(*e*) "Behold I send unto you prophets and wise men and scribes (says our blessed Saviour, upbraiding the Jews with their bloody persecutions of the righteous), and some of

(*a*) 2 Kings xiii. 17.
(*d*) Ibid. ver. 19.

(*b*) *Le Clerc's* Commentary on 2 Kings xiii. 19.
(*e*) Matth. xxiii. 34, &c.

(*c*) Ibid. ver. 14.

them ye shall kill and crucify, and some of them ye shall scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city; that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zechariah, the son of Barachiah, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar:" And hereupon some names of great authority have inferred, that the Zechariah, son of the high priest, whom Joash king of Judah commanded to be slain, was the same with the person whom our Saviour here mentions; for though he calls his father by a different name, Barachiah, and not Jehoiada, yet this he might do, say they, to denote the divine graces which were so conspicuous in him; for so the word Barachiah means.

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It must be observed, however, that as there is a difference in these two persons, not only in regard to their father's names, but to the place likewise where they suffered, the one (a) "between the temple and the altar," i. e. in the court of the priests, and the other (b) "in the court of the house of the Lord," i. e. in the court of the Israelites, where he was mounted on high, and inveighing against their idolatry, there are some grounds to believe, that the Zecharias in the gospel is not the same with him whose death we find recorded in the chronicles of the kings of Judah.

Our blessed Saviour, it must be owned, not only foretold the utter excision of the Jews, but described likewise several preceding calamities, almost in the very manner wherein their own historian has related them. Now, in the times of the Jewish war, Josephus (c) makes mention of one Zacharias, and gives us these circumstances concerning his murder:—That he was the son of one Baruch, a man of the first rank, and of great authority, virtue, and wealth, a friend to all good men, and a constant enemy to the wicked; that his son Zacharias was, by the zealots of that time, looked upon as a man so very popular, that they could not think themselves safe without taking away his life; that to this purpose they brought him before a sham court of their own erecting, where they accused him of a conspiracy to betray Jerusalem to the Romans, and of holding a criminal correspondence with Vespasian; that upon his trial, his innocence appeared so clear, and the accusations against him so false and malicious, that their own court, contrary to their expectation, acquitted him; but that, after he was acquitted, two ruffians of their company fell upon him, and, having murdered him in the middle of the temple, threw his dead body down the precipice whereon it stood.

This is the person (as others imagine) that our Saviour intends; for as he begins with Abel, the first instance of a person suffering by violence, it is but reasonable, they think, that he should conclude with one of the latest among the Jews while their government subsisted; and therefore they look upon our Lord's words, not as a recital of what had been done, but a prediction of what would be done; and a glorious evidence it is of his Divine omniscience, which could foretel the names both of father and son above forty years before the event happened.

However this be, we must not accuse the father of that Zacharias, who died a martyr in the reign of Joash king of Judah, of shewing a busy and pragmatistical spirit, in placing this Joash, when a child, upon the throne of his ancestors. Jehoiada, as he was high priest, had a large authority even in civil affairs; [for the government being a theocracy in which the church and state made but one society, the high priest was *ex officio* first minister of state, inferior even in civil affairs only to the king, who was in fact nothing more than viceroy. Jehoiada, therefore, was far from being, as the ignorance of this objector supposes, a private man as to secular affairs: In spiritual matters], (d) the dignity of his station set him at the head of a very powerful body of men, the priests and Levites; and his quality, as first judge and president of the great council of the nation, gave him a right to defend oppressed innocence, and made it his duty to oppose the

(a) Matth. xxiii. 35. (b) 2 Chron. xxiv. 21.
(d) Calmet's Commentary on 2 Kings xi. 4.

(c) *History of the Jewish Wars*, lib. i. c. 5.

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unjust usurpation of Athalia, who had no pretence of claim to the crown, and was descended likewise from a wicked family, which God had particularly devoted to destruction.

(a) The constitution of the nation moreover was such, that the crown, by Divine appointment, was appropriated to the sons of David; and therefore the hereditary right was inherent in him whom he had set up, whose aunt he had married, whose kinsman he was by birth as well as marriage, and who upon these accounts, as well as all necessary qualifications for so high a trust, was the properest guardian of the succession. For he had a large share of wisdom and experience, an ardent love for the public good, courage and activity in his complexion, and a solid piety towards God ruling in his heart; and yet he did not act alone in this important affair, but had the consent and concurrence of the chief officers, both civil and ecclesiastic, the special motion and assistance of God's blessed Spirit, and (as we may suppose) the direction and encouragement of the principal prophets that were then alive.

His son, indeed, was but badly requited for all the care which his father had taken in setting the crown upon young Joash, when, in his reign, and by his orders, he was stoned to death, and, as he was expiring, cried out, (b) "Lord look upon it, and requite it." But we must not by these words imagine that he died with a spirit of revenge, (for far be it from so good a man) but that, by the Spirit of prophecy, he only foretold, that it would not be long before God would find out some means of punishing the king for his barbarous usage of him: Which accordingly came to pass; for, in the following verses, we read, that (c) "at the end of the year, the host of Syria came up against him," and not long after that, (d) "his own servants conspired against him, and slew him on his bed."

The spirit of the Gospel, it must be owned, is of a much more gentle and forgiving temper than that of the law, under which we meet with several such imprecations (especially in the Psalmist) as cannot, without violence, admit of any other construction. Our blessed Saviour, in his reasoning with the Jews, tells them, (e) that Moses did indulge them in some cases, because of the hardness of their hearts; not that God ever did, or ever will humour any man, because he is obstinate and obdurate; but the sense of the words is, (f) that God therefore connived at some things, because the dispensation under which they lived wanted proper efficacy to work their hearts to a greater softness. We are not therefore to wonder, that we find some disparity in the behaviour of a Christian and Jewish martyr, but that such prophetic declarations, concerning the future punishment of enemies and persecutors, were not thought wicked and uncharitable; even under a more perfect dispensation, we have the example of the great apostle of the Gentiles to evince, who, speaking of Alexander the copper-smith, who had greatly opposed him, (g) "the Lord reward him, says he, according to his works;" where it is to be observed, that the king's manuscript reads ἀποδώσει, and not ἀποδόν, i. e. "shall or will reward;" and most of the ancient commentators have remarked, that this is not an imprecation, but a prediction only, not unbecoming an apostle*.

What God says of the king of Assyria, whom he calls "the rod of his anger, and the staff of his indignation, is not unapplicable to Jehu, after he was advanced to the throne of Israel: "I sent him against the people of my wrath, to tread them down like mire of the streets, howbeit he meant not so, neither did his heart think so, but it was in his

(a) *Pool's* Annotations.

(b) 2 Chron. xxiv. 22.

(c) *Ibid.* ver. 23.

(d) *Ibid.* ver. 25.

(e) Matth. xix. 8.

(f) *Young's* Sermons.

(g) 2 Tim. iv. 14.

* [I do not think it either necessary or possible to vindicate every Jewish worthy from harbouring a spirit of revenge. Judaism was not a perfect reli-

gion; and to endeavour to place it, in any respect on the same footing with Christianity, is not to serve the cause of revelation at large. The same knowledge and justness of thinking are not looked for in a school where nothing is taught but the first rudiments of learning, that we reasonably expect in a university, where a liberal education is completed.]

heart to destroy, and cut off nations not a few." Jehu indeed made great ostentation of his zeal for the Lord, and declared that, during his administration, (a) "there should fall to the earth nothing of what he had said concerning the house of Ahab;" and it must be acknowledged, that for his performance of the Divine commands in this regard, (b) he received commendations from God, and a settlement of his family in the throne of Israel for four successions; and yet we may say of him, "that he meant not so, neither did his heart think so:" He was still a bad man, though he did well in executing that which was right in God's eyes, as to the abolishment of the worship of Baal; (c) but his obstinate persistence in the sin of Jeroboam may be justly alledged against him, as an argument of his false heartedness in all his other actions.

Why he continued in this kind of idolatry, the reasons were much the same with him that they were with the first institutor of it,—lest, by permitting his subjects to go to the place appointed for Divine worship, he might open a door for their return to their obedience to the house of David; and not only so, but disoblige likewise a great part of the nobility of the nation, who, by this time, had been long accustomed, and were warmly affected to the worship of the golden calves. Herein however he made a plain discovery of his sin and folly, in not daring to trust God with the keeping of his kingdom, though it was from his kindness and donation that he had it, and in apprehending any danger from the house of David, or the kingdom of Judah, which were both now in so weak and declining a condition, that they were much more likely to be swallowed up by him.

(d) The truth is, Jehu was a wicked, bold, furious, and implacable man; but a man of this complexion (considering the work he was to be set about) was a proper instrument to be employed; and so far is it from tending to the reproach, that it is infinitely to the glory of God, that he can make use of such boisterous and unruly passions of mankind for the accomplishment of his just designs, according to the observation of the royal Psalmist, (e) "surely the wrath of man shall praise thee, and the remainder of his wrath shalt thou restrain." This he plainly did in the case of Jehu; for, after he had settled him in the possession of a kingdom, and still found that he persisted in his political idolatry, he brought down the king of Syria upon him, (f) who smote the coasts of Israel, and quite wasted all that part of his kingdom which lay beyond the river Jordan.

There is this to be said, however, concerning Jehu's cutting off Ahaziah and (g) the other branches of his family, that though his primary intent in doing it was to secure himself in the possession of the kingdom, against all claims that might come from the house of Ahab; yet did he not act entirely contrary to his commission, because (h) Ahaziah was the son of Athalia, the daughter of Ahab, and the order of God was, (i) that the whole house of Ahab should perish. But then the question is, where it was that Ahaziah was slain, because, in the two accounts that we have of his death, there seems to be some repugnancy? The account which we have in the second book of Kings runs thus;—(k) "When Ahaziah saw the death of Jehoram king of Israel, he fled by the way of the garden-house, and Jehu followed after him, and said, smite him also in his chariot: And they did so, at the going up to Gur, which is by Ibleam, and he fled to Megiddo, and there died." But in the book of Chronicles it is said, that (l) "when Jehu was executing judgment upon the house of Ahab, and found the princes of Judah, even the sons of the brethren of Ahaziah, that ministered unto Ahaziah, he slew them. And he sought Ahaziah, and they caught him, (for he was hid in Samaria) and brought him to Jehu, and when they had slain him, they buried him."

(a) *Whitby's Commentary* on the New Testament.
 (d) *Pool's Annotations* on 2 Kings x. 14.
 (l) 2 Chron. xxii. 7, &c.

(e) Psal. lxxvi. 10.
 (h) 2 Kings viii. 18.

(b) 2 Kings x. 10.
 (f) 2 Kings x. 12.
 (i) 2 Kings ix. 8.

(c) *Ibid.* ver. 29.
 (g) *Pool's Annotations* on 2 Chron. viii. to the end of 2 Chron.
 (k) *Ibid.* ver. 27.

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&c. or 4654.
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or 757.

Now, in order to reconcile the different accounts of the same event, we must observe, (a) that as one great end of writing the book of Chronicles was to supply such matters as had been omitted in the book of Kings; so this account of the death of Ahaziah, in the latter, is very short, and included in the story of Jehoram, that the reader, at one and the same view, as it were, might perceive in what manner it was that both these princes fell; but in the former it is told more large; and therefore, to complete the history, we must take in both accounts; and from thence we may gather,—That upon seeing Jehoram mortally wounded, Ahaziah turned his chariot, and made the best of his way to Samaria, in order to escape into his own kingdom; but finding the passes too narrowly guarded, he thought proper to conceal himself in the town, in hopes of a better opportunity; that Jehu, in the meantime, coming to Samaria, and having intelligence that Ahaziah was lurking there, ordered that diligent search should be made for him, and when he was found, that he should be carried to Gur (the place, in all probability, where his father Joram had slain all his brethren), and there be killed in his chariot, that so his servants might immediately carry off his corps, and bury it. But as Jehu's order to the officers that were entrusted with the execution, was only, that they should smite him, they thought it enough to give him a mortal wound, so that his servants carried him from thence to Megiddo, the next town in the tribe of Issachar, where he died.

This makes the circumstances consistent: And though we are no ways concerned (especially when the Sacred History is silent) to assign any reasons for such furious passions as are frequently observed in great and wicked men; yet it may be hard matter to imagine something more probable, than what (b) Josephus makes the cause of Jehoram's indignation against Elisha, and his vowing to take off his head; even because he refused to intercede with God for the removal of the famine that had, at this time, so sorely wasted the city of Samaria. From the many miracles which Elisha did, the king very likely might be convinced, that the same spirit which once resided in Elijah was now descended upon him; and therefore, as Elijah had power, by his prayers, either to shut or open the windows of heaven, either to cause or remove a famine as he pleased, (c) he might possibly imagine, that God had conferred the same privilege upon Elisha, and might therefore be highly incensed against him, because he would not make use of it in the preservation of a city reduced to the utmost distress. But we can hardly imagine, that a wicked and idolatrous prince (as Jehoram certainly was) would ever entertain so high a conception of any of the Lord's prophets: And therefore we must endeavour to find out some other reason for the violence of his rage and indignation against him.

When the prophet Elisha carried the detachment of the Syrian army, which was sent to apprehend him at Dothan, hood-winked (as it were) into the city of Samaria, Jehoram, we find, would have gladly taken this advantage, and fallen upon them with the sword; (d) “my father, shall I smite, shall I smite them?” So eager was he to have them destroyed, as we may learn from the repetition of his words! But by no means would the prophet permit him; on the contrary, he ordered them to be treated with much civility, and dismissed in peace. An usage this which deserved a better return than what they made the Israelites the year following, when they came and besieged Samaria, and sorely distressed it. The king of Israel, therefore, reflecting on the opportunity which, had he employed it as he desired, would have disabled the army from making any fresh invasions, but was unhappily lost, by listening to an old doting prophet (as he might call him), was grieved beyond measure, and hereupon vowed to make his life pay for the lives of those who, by his counsel, had escaped, and were now returned to repeat their hostilities. It may be supposed likewise, that upon the return

(a) *Pool's Annotations.*
(d) 2 Kings vi. 21.

(b) *Jewish Antiquities*, lib. ix. c. 2.

(c) *Pool's Annotations.*

of the Syrian army, the king of Israel, knowing himself in no condition to oppose them, might possibly be for purchasing a peace at any rate; which Elisha might endeavour to dissuade him from, by giving him all along assurance, that the enemy should at length be defeated. Finding however no effect in the prophet's promises, and, on the contrary, seeing his capital closely besieged, and the people reduced to great extremity of want, he began to repent him of following his advice; and being shocked at hearing the horrid story (and that from the mother's own mouth) of her being forced to eat her own child for hunger, he fell into a rage, and vowed to be revenged of Elisha, as one who, by his bad counsel, had occasioned all that misery. (a) "God do so to me, and more also, if the head of Elisha, the son of Shaphat, shall stand on him to day;" never considering that his own manifold and crying sins, especially his obstinate adhering to the idolatry of the calves, (b) and the whoredoms and witchcrafts of his mother Jezebel, were the true and proper causes of all his calamities.

From 1 Kings
viii. to the end
of 2 Chron.

Jehu (as we said before) was a wicked and ambitious man; and it is much to be questioned whether he would have executed the Divine will so punctually, had it not fallen in with his own interest and designs. He had now extirpated the house of Ahab; and, as Ahab had been the first introducer of the idolatry of Baal into the kingdom of Israel, he could not but think, that the priests and prophets, and such as adhered to the worship of that false god, were of Jezebel's faction, and might, at one time or other, take occasion to revenge her death. Something or other was therefore necessary to be done, in order to get rid of this dangerous set of men, and, that the business might be done effectually, to get rid of them all at once. (c) He was a person of a known indifference in matters of religion, who, in this regard, always conformed to the humours of the court, and, in the reign of king Ahab, had been as strenuous a worshipper of Baal as any; and therefore, how could the people tell, when they read his proclamation for a great feast, and a solemn sacrifice to be offered unto Baal, but that, in good earnest, he had returned to his former love to the religion which he once embraced, and only deserted for a while, in complacency to others? He had gone on a little oddly indeed at his entrance upon the government, had murdered their chief patroness, and made free with some of their priests likewise; but these priests perhaps were (d) domestics to Jezebel, or too nearly related to Ahab's family not to go off in the common slaughter. Some instances of this kind could hardly be helped in the heat of execution, when the man was resolved to secure himself, and remove all competitors: But now that he has nothing to fear, why should we think, but that a prince who has no sense of religion at all, should be a worshipper of our god Baal (that glorious luminary † which shines so bright in the firmament of heaven) as he is of the golden calves?

Thus, we may suppose, the Baalites reasoned, upon reading the king's proclamation so apparently in favour of their idolatry; and God, in his judgment, suffered their (e) "foolish hearts to be thus darkened; and because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved, for this cause he sent upon them a strong delusion, that they might believe a lie." But whether they deluded themselves into this persuasion or not, this they knew by experience, that Jehu was a man of a fierce and bloody temper, who would not fail to put his threats in execution; and therefore reading in the same proclamation, that (f) "whosoever shall be wanting, he shall not live," they found themselves reduced to this sad dilemma either to go or die: And therefore they thought it the wisest way to run the hazard, and throw themselves upon his mercy, having this at least to plead for themselves, that they were not disobedient to his commands. The

(a) 2 Kings vi. 31.

(b) Chap. ix. 22.

(c) *Pool's* Annotations.

(d) 2 Kings x. 11.

† Baal and Astaroth are commonly joined together; and as it is believed that Astaroth denotes the moon, we may with good reason say, that Baal is put for the sun. *Calmet's* Dictionary.

(e) 2 Thess. ii. 11.

(f) 2 Kings x. 19.

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&c. or 4654.
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1003, &c.
or 757.

only remaining question is, if every one obeyed this summons, how could the temple of Baal be capable of receiving them all?

Now the words of Jehu's summons are these,—“(a) call unto me all the prophets of Baal, all his servants, and all his priests, let none be wanting; for I have a great sacrifice to offer unto Baal.—And Jehu did it in subtilty, to the intent that he might destroy the worshippers of Baal.” In which words we may observe, (b) that two particular orders of men are distinctly mentioned, the prophets and priests; and therefore we may presume, that the servants and worshippers who are joined with them, were some of an inferior kind, (such as Levites in the Jewish, or deacons in the Christian church) who attended upon the other in their sacred ministrations; because, in the 22d verse, we find “Jehu ordering him who was over the vestry, to bring forth vestments for all the worshippers of Baal,” which cannot be meant of the people in general, because they wore no distinct garments in their worship either of God or Baal, but of priests and ministers only. These were the great support of the present idolatry; and therefore Jehu concluded very justly, that if he did but once destroy them, all the common worshippers would fall away of course.

But, even if we take the words servants and worshippers in their utmost latitude, we need not doubt, but that the temple of Baal (c), which was built in the capital city, and near the royal palace, and being the chief in its kind, was designed for the use of the king and queen, and particularly, perhaps, for such great and high solemnities, was large and capacious enough to hold them all. For besides this principal building, (d) there might be several outward courts, (as there were in the temple at Jerusalem) where the people stood while they worshipped (as they did in the temple-service), and these, together with the temple itself, would afford space sufficient for all the idolaters of that kind, both ministers and people, that were then in the whole kingdom. For, since the days of Ahab, by the ministry of Elijah, Elisha, and the rest of the prophets, as well as by the slaughter which Hazael in his wars against Israel had made among many of them, the number of Baal's worshippers had been greatly diminished. Jehoram himself, as we read, (e) “put away the image of Baal that his father had made;” and when the king withdrew his presence and encouragement, his subjects, without doubt for the generality, followed his example; for it cannot be supposed, that the worship of such senseless idols could ever be kept up (especially among a people that had the oracles of God in their custody) without the influence of some great authority, or the consideration of some wicked and worldly ends.

DISSERTATION III.

OF JONAH'S MISSION TO NINEVEH, AND ABODE IN THE WHALE'S BELLY.

IN the whole compass of the Old Testament, I know of no passage that has been made so popular a topic of banter and ridicule, and which the lovers of infidelity, in all ages, have so much delighted to descant upon, as the story of Jonah's continuing three days

(a) 2 Kings x. 19.
(d) Patrick's Commentary.

(b) Pool's Annotations.
(e) 2 Kings iii. 2.

(c) Pool, Ibid.

and three nights in the whale's belly. The story indeed, at first hearing, sounds surprisingly; and therefore we need not wonder that the wit and sagacity of a Porphyry, or a Julian, found some plausible exceptions against it, which our modern retailers and malicious improvers of their objections have endeavoured to decry as a wild romance, or at best but a parabolical representation of something else.

From 1 Kings
viii. to the end
of 2 Chron.

"That a man, thrown into the sea with all his clothes on, should, in the very nick of time, meet with a fish, and such a fish as was never heard of before, large enough to swallow him up quick, and without hurting an hair of his head, to keep him in his stomach for so many days and nights alive; that in this narrow and gloomy prison he should be able to breathe, and live, and be nourished; thence send up his prayers to God, and thence promise himself a deliverance in due time; this is an account of things so very absurd, that there is no possibility of believing it. For admitting that Jonah got safe and sound down the whale's throat, yet how could he subsist there without air, or continue any time without being parboiled? The stomach, we know, would do its office; and therefore we cannot but think, that in a few hours, much more in three days, the man must, of course, have been totally dissolved, and his body converted into the body of the fish; or, if its digestion was not so quick, he must, at least when cast upon the shore, have been sadly sodden, and unfit to be sent upon another expedition.

What God can do we must not dispute; but then great care should be taken not to magnify his power to the diminution of his wisdom, or to think that he is so lavish of his miracles, as to save a rebellious prophet, that was disobeying his orders, and fleeing if possible from his presence; that deserved indeed to be left to the mercy of the waves, and made food for the fishes of the sea, rather than vouchsafed so stupendous a preservation: And all this for what? Even to compel him to go, against his will, to a wicked city with an unwelcome message; as if there had been no prophet in Israel, but this sullen and refractory man, to be sent upon this errand."

Nineveh, at the time when Jonah was sent thither, was the metropolis of the Assyrian empire, and one of the largest and most ancient cities in the world. According to the best chronologers it was built not long after the flood, and very soon after the tower of Babel by Nimrod; but being afterwards greatly enlarged by Ninus, from him it received its name. It was situated upon the banks of the Tigris, and (as Diodorus (*a*) has given us the description of it) was, in length, an hundred and fifty stadia; in breadth fourscore and ten; and in circumference four hundred and seventy; which, being reduced to our measure, make it about one and twenty miles long, nine broad, and four and fifty round. How stately its walls, and how lofty its towers were, the same historian has taken care to inform us; and how great the number of its inhabitants was, we may learn from (*b*) "the six score thousand children, who could not discern between their right hands and their left:" For, according to a proportionate computation, there must have been in the whole above six hundred thousand persons.

Now we have wrong conceptions of God, if we think that, because he made the children of Israel his peculiar people, he therefore neglected all the world besides. On the contrary, (*c*) "Though he shewed his word unto Jacob, and his statutes and ordinances unto Israel," in a particular manner, yet he did not leave himself without a witness in other nations; but whenever they were drawing destruction upon themselves, took care to acquaint them with their impending doom. To this purpose, we may observe, that not only Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel, but almost all the other prophets, do foretel the destruction of Babylon, and publish the Divine threats against Egypt, Edom, and the other kingdoms neighbouring upon Canaan; that (*d*) Jeremiah, in particular, was ordered by God to make himself bonds and yokes, and send them to the kings of the Ammonites, of Tyre, and Sidon, and other princes, by the hand of their ministers, who

(*a*) Lib. ii. Bib.

(*b*) Jonah iv. 11

(*c*) Psal. cxlvii. 19.

(*d*) Jer. xxvii. 2, &c.

A. M. 3001,
&c. or 4654.
Ant. Chris.
1003, &c.
or 757.

were then at the court of Zedekiah, king of Judah, with his admonition to their masters, that unless they repented of their evil ways, he would deliver them into the power of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Baylon, whom he calls his servant, even as he does (a) Cyrus his anointed (for being appointed to execute his will) some hundred years before he was born; and therefore we need less wonder that we find God interesting himself in the preservation of the large and populous city of Nineveh, upon which depended the whole fate of the Assyrian empire, since in all ages he has given proofs of his protection and absolute dominion over other nations, as well as the Israelites, either in threatening their disobedience, in order to procure their amendment, or, if they despised his threatenings, in punishing their obstinacy as they deserve.

(b) "Is he the God of the Jews only? Is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also," says an apostle of great authority: And therefore we may presume, that as Jonah was the only prophet in the Old Testament that was sent expressly to preach to the Gentiles, God might design hereby to give to his people a premonition of his intention, "in the fulness of time, (c) to raise up a Root of Jesse (as the prophet expresses it), which should stand for an Ensign of the people, and unto which the Gentiles should seek: To (d) break down the middle wall of partition, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances;" and to unite all nations in one communion, "under (e) one great Shepherd and Bishop of their souls."

But whether God might design this call to the Ninevites, as a pledge and assurance of his future admission of the people of all nations into the privileges of the Christian covenant; this certainly he might have under his immediate view, viz. to shew the disparity between his people and aliens, and, upon the comparison of their several behaviours, shame them for living unreclaimed under the constant preaching of his prophets for so many years, when a people, whom they despised as "being strangers to the covenant of promise," had, by the mighty power of his word, been converted in the space of three days.

Nothing is more common in Scripture, than to find God complaining of his people for not attending to the messages which he sent them. (f) "Since the day that their fathers came forth out of Egypt (says God to one of his prophets), even unto this day, I have sent unto them all my servants, the prophets, daily rising up early and sending them; yet they hearkened not unto me, nor inclined their ear, but hardened their neck, and did worse than their fathers: Therefore shalt thou speak all these words unto them, but they will not hearken, and thou shalt call unto them, but they will not answer thee." And therefore God, very well foreknowing the success that his prophet would meet with, might send him with commission to preach to the Ninevites, not only in pursuance of his kind purposes to them, but with an intent likewise to render his own people inexcusable, even as our Saviour represents the case of the Jews in his days who refused to hear him: (g) "The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and behold a greater than Jonah is here."

And indeed some have imagined, that one great cause of Jonah's declining the order at first, and of his going at last with so much reluctance to Nineveh, might be some suspicion, that in case these Gentiles should listen to his preaching, it might be not only a lasting reproach, but a means of reprobation likewise to his countrymen, who, under the constant ministration of so many prophets, were only become more obdurate in sin: And therefore, jealous of the honour of his nation, and too solicitous for their preservation, he could not prevail with himself to accept of a commission that seemed to interfere with this, lest a ready compliance with the Divine commands at Nineveh

(a) Isaiah xlv. 1.
(e) 1 Pet. ii. 25.

(b) Rom. iii. 19.
(f) Jer. vii. 25, &c.

(c) Isaiah xi. 10.
(g) Matth. xii. 41.

(d) Eph. ii. 14.

should prove the disparagement, at least, if not the utter rejection “of (a) his brethren, his kinsmen after the flesh.” From 1 Kings-
viii. to the end
of 2 Chron.

The prophet himself, however, has suggested another reason for his unwillingness to go to Nineveh, and that is, the superabundant mercy of God, which he foresaw would be moved to pity at the prayers and tears of the people, and therefore he remonstrates thus: (b) “I pray thee, O Lord, was not this my saying when I was yet in my country? Therefore I fled before unto Tarshish; for I knew that thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil.” But how plausible soever this excuse may be, yet, upon the face of the whole affair, it appears, that the prophet considered himself a little too much; and therefore we may conclude, that the true reason for his declining this errand, was the hazard and difficulty of the undertaking, and the great uncertainty of its success: The very same thought that deterred Moses from applying to Pharaoh to grant the Israelites their liberty, and Gideon from taking up arms to rescue his country from the slavery of the Midianites: For as each of these made their several excuses; “I am of uncircumcised lips, says one, and how shall Pharaoh hearken unto me?” And, “I am the least in my father’s house, says the other, and how then shall I save Israel?” So might Jonah say within himself, “I am less than the least of the prophets,” and how then can I expect that the people of so great and opulent a city will give any attention to my preaching; that they will not rather take the alarm, and fall upon me, and slay me, when I come to tell them that their ruin and destruction is so near approaching? I will get quit of this dangerous affair, therefore, as well as I can, and, because I conceive that the Spirit of prophecy (which upon this account makes me so uneasy) will not pursue me after I am gone out of the Holy Land, I will make the best of my way into Cilicia; for when I have got at some distance from Judea, God perhaps may think no more of sending me, but may find him out some other prophet that is better qualified for this purpose.’ But, (c) “Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? (as one better instructed than Jonah seems to be in this article of his omnipresence, addresses himself to God) Or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there; if I go down into hell, thou art there also; if I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there also shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me;” which no man ever so experimentally found to be true as did this prophet, while he sojourned in the deep, and took up his habitation in the whale’s belly.

(d) Some learned men, indeed, are of opinion, that the fish which swallowed up Jonah was not a whale, because the largest of these (as they tell us) have but in proportion very narrow gullets, such as are not capable of receiving a man entire into their stomachs: And therefore they imagine, that it was what they call the lamia, or sea-dog, which, though less in bulk than a whale, has a gullet so vastly large, that frequently in its stomach have been found men, all whole and entire, (e) and sometimes clad in armour.

It must be acknowledged, that the Hebrew *Dag-gadol*, which the text in Jonah makes use of, signifies no more than any great fish; but then it makes something for the common opinion, that the whale is the largest species we know of that swims in the sea. The ancients indeed seem to have enlarged too much in their account of this animal. (f) Pliny talks of some that were six hundred feet long, and above half as much broad. Solinus (g) makes others no less than eight hundred feet; and Dionysius (h) seems to affirm of others, that they had a throat wide enough to swallow up a ship with all its

(a) Rom. ix. 3.

(b) Jonah iv. 2.

(c) Psal. cxxxix. 7.

(d) Bochart

de Animal. sacris, part ii. lib. v. c. 12. Bartholin. de Morbis Biblicis, art. 14.

(e) This a French

author, named Rondelet, reports of one of these sea-dogs, which was taken near Nice or Marseilles. Calmet’s Dissert. sur le Poisson qui engloutit Jonah.

(f) Lib. xxxviii. c. 1.

(g) Cap. 52.

(h) Periegetes, ver. 603.

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rigging. But though these may pass for extravagant exaggerations, (a) an author, who has wrote expressly upon this subject, gives us this account,—“That in the northern seas, there are whales of such a prodigious bigness, that, when their flesh is taken off, and nothing left but their skeletons, they look like large vessels, or rather like spacious houses, with several chambers and windows in them, wherein a whole family might find room to live.” Their mouth (every one allows) is capable of containing several men at once. We are told (b) of one cast upon the coast of Tuscany, in the year 1624, whose jaws were so wide, that a man on horseback might have rode into them with ease: And we have not much reason to doubt, but that their throat and belly are answerable to (c) so spacious an opening.

It cannot be thought, indeed, but the œsophagus, in creatures that are dead, must be contracted to a great degree, in comparison to what it is when they are alive, and especially when they are eating; in which case it is capable of so great dilatation (as is evident from a pike’s sometimes swallowing another fish almost of his own magnitude), that we need not much fear, but that the fish which God had provided for that purpose was able to gulp Jonah down at once without ever hurting him. For the whale, as we are told, has neither teeth nor tushes (whereas the sea-dog has four or five rows of teeth in each jaw), and is therefore the much properer of the two to receive into its stomach any thing alive without the danger of contusion.

Thus we have conveyed Jonah safe and sound into the whale’s belly; let us, in the next place, see how he is to live there for the space of three days. The Scripture indeed speaks precisely of (d) “three days and three nights;” but as Jonah was a type of our Saviour, and his abode in the belly of the whale a prefiguration of our Lord’s continuance (e) “in the heart of the earth,” there is some reason to think, that the type and the antitype, in this respect, were both alike; and that, as our Lord was but one whole day, and part of two more, in the grave, so Jonah might continue no longer in the deep; and yet, according to the Hebrew way of computation, both be truly said to have been “three days and three nights” in their respective confinements. But not to insist on this abbreviation of time, what some naturalists tell us of the food of the whale, viz. That it does not live on flesh, but on weeds, on the froth of the sea, on insects, and such small fish as are easy of digestion, and that, consequently, as having a colder stomach, it was a fitter receptacle for the prophet than any other fish that was carnivorous: this might be of some consideration perhaps, were we not disposed to call in the miraculous power of God, which alone could preserve him in these circumstances. But then, we cannot but allow, that as he suspended the violence of the fire from hurting the three young men that were cast into the furnace; that as he made St Peter’s body either so light as to walk upon the waters, or the waters so solid as to support it; so, with the same facility, he might control the acid humours in any creature’s stomach, and make it (for such a determinate time) lose its faculty of digestion: For in all this there is nothing that surpasses the power of the great Author of Nature, who gives or suspends the activity of all bodies, who stops or controls, who changes or modifies, as he thinks fit, all the motion which he communicates to matter, of what kind soever it be. And, in like manner, though it be impossible, according to the ordinary laws of nature, for a man to breathe in the stomach of a fish, or at least to draw in such a quantity of air as is requisite to give a due circulation to his blood; yet since it is neither contrary to the nature, nor superior to the power of God, by one means or other, to effect the thing, if it be but agreeable to his will, we cannot see any reason why it may not be done.

(a) *Olaus Magnus*, de Piscibus Monstros. lib. xxi. c. 15, 16.

(b) *John Cabri*, of the Academy of Florence, makes mention of this whale.

(c) *Quanto Hiato patebat os illud, quod veluti janua speluncæ illius fuit.*

(d) *Jonah i. 17.*

(e) *Matth. xii. 40.*

Bats, and swallows, and other birds, which in the cold season of the year creep into cliffs of rocks, and hollow trees, (a) creatures that live under ground, and several others that abide at the bottom of deep waters, subsist in a manner without breathing. They live, as it were, in a deliquium of life, and the blood in their veins seems to move very slowly, if at all; and yet we find them revive again upon the approach of the genial heat of the sun, to give their blood and juices a brisker fermentation; and why might not God then, during these three days and nights, put Jonah into the very same state of repose and tranquillity, that either the element they live in, or the colder season of the year, do naturally bring upon these animals, by correcting the fluidity, and retarding the circulation of his blood, so as to make frequent respiration not so necessary?

From 1 Kings
viii to the end
of 2 Chron.

The ancient physicians were of opinion, that while the child continued in its mother's womb, it lived without breathing, so that there was no employment for the lungs until it came into the open air; but later anatomists will persuade us, that, without some circulation of blood in the body, no animal can live; and therefore they pretend to have found out in the foetus a considerable artery which conveys the blood from the vena cava (without its passing into the right ventricle of the heart) into the lungs; from whence, by another smaller artery (which they call the *botal*), it is carried into the aorta, and so continues in a perpetual circulation, without entering the lobes of the lungs, which are not replete with blood, nor begin to move, until the child is born, and sucks in the fresh air. For then, say they, the blood, being forced by the motion of the heart into the artery, whose orifice lies in its right ventricle, goes directly into the lungs, and is thence brought back by the pulmonary vein; so that the other vessels, which help the circulation of the blood in the foetus, being now become useless, do by degrees stop, and are dried up. But it may not always happen so: In some particular persons, nature sometimes preserves them open; and this is the reason which some give us why the divers (as they are called) who accustom themselves to go under water to discover and bring up the riches of the deep, can abide so long in that element without breathing.

We pretend not however to advance, that Jonah was one of this sort of men; but still we may affirm, that it was in God's power, during his continuance in the fish's belly, to put him in such a state of acquiescence, and his blood into such a form of circulation, as would require no more respiration than the foetus has in the womb. In this there is nothing impossible, nothing incompatible with the laws of nature; though it must be acknowledged, that, strictly speaking, the thing is above the ordinary and known laws of nature, and therefore miraculous. But then, if we believe not this miracle, why should we believe any other? or why should it be thought a more incredible thing, that Jonah should live three days in the belly of a large fish, than that Lazarus (b) should be recalled to life again, after he had been four days buried in the grave? that the prophet should return from this sea-monster's stomach safe and sound, than that the (c) three Jews in Babylon should escape from the flaming furnace, without having so much "as the smell of the fire pass upon them?"

"But other miracles, it may be said, were done for some wise ends of Providence, and when there appeared an urgent occasion for God's exerting his Almighty power; whereas in the case before us there seems to be none at all."

That prophets, however, invested with great power, and sometimes entrusted with high commissions from God, were (d) "men subject to like passions and infirmities as we are," is evident, not only from the testimony of the apostle, but from the accounts of their own behaviour likewise. The prophet that was sent to Bethel to denounce God's judgment against the idolatrous altar, was a sad example of human frailty, in giving credit to the persuasions of another, even when they contradicted a Divine com-

(a) *Calmet's Dissert. sur le Poisson, &c.*
(c) *Dan. iii. 27.*

(b) *John xi. 17, 39, 44.*
(d) *James v. 17.*

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mand. Jonah, when he was directed to go to Nineveh, discovered the like, if not greater tokens of human infirmity, when, instead of pursuing that journey, he bent his course another way, not without some vain hopes of evading by that means the Divine Presence : And therefore, as God sent a lion to slay the prophet of Judah for his too much credulity ; so some have imagined, that he not only pursued this prophet of Israel with a dreadful storm, but even had him thrown over-board, and swallowed up by this sea-monster, in punishment for his perverseness and prevarication. God indeed, by his overruling power, made the belly of this monster a place of security to him ; but what notions the prophet himself had of this strange habitation, (a) “ where the floods compassed him about, and the billows and waves passed over him,” we may learn from his meditations in the deep, (b) “ when he cried, by reason of his affliction, to the Lord, and he heard him :” So that, upon the presumption, that God intended not to destroy him, the primary reason, we may imagine, for his appointing this fish to swallow him up, was to stop this fugitive prophet, as he was endeavouring to make his escape ; but then, “ in the midst of judgment thinking upon mercy,” after a confinement of three nights and three days in the deep, whereby he both taught him better obedience for the future, and rectified his notions concerning the Divine Omnipresence, he ordered his jailor (if we may so speak) to give him his liberty, and deliver him safe on shore.

The oriental traditions do vastly differ as to the place where Jonah was cast upon the land. (c) Josephus must needs be under a gross mistake, when, to throw him upon some coast of the Euxine Sea, he makes the whale (which could hardly be any quick mover) run eight hundred leagues, at least, in three days and nights : neither are others who, from the upper part of the Mediterranean, carry him into the ocean, and thence into the Red Sea, or the Persian Gulph, in the like space of time, any happier in their conjectures. This ship, we know, was bound for Tarsus (d), a great trading town in Cilicia, a province in Asia Minor, at the east end of the Mediterranean Sea * ; and therefore the most probable opinion is, that, somewhere on this coast, the fish disembogued itself of Jonah ; and if so, the mariners who, by the time that he was set on shore, had arrived at their port, when they heard the strange account of his deliverance, must have become converts to the worship of that God only, who, in this instance, had shewn himself able (e) “ to do whatever he pleased in heaven, and in the earth, in the sea, and in all the deep places.”

In the storm which St Paul, in his voyage from Crete to Rome, underwent, an angel stood by him one night, and said unto him, (f) “ Lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee :” and if, by the expression, we may understand the salvation of their souls as well as their bodies, a sufficient reason it was for God’s permitting this distress to fall upon them, since eventually it proved the occasion of their conversion. And, in like manner, if the sudden ceasing of the storm upon “ Jonah’s being cast forth into the sea, (g) made so strong an impression upon the mariners that sailed with him ; how can we think but that his miraculous escape out of that merciless element (especially when he came to recount the particulars of it) would make them all proselytes to his religion ? And, if we may suppose farther, that some of the ship’s crew accompanied him to Nineveh, as knowing the purpose of his errand thither, to testify to the people that he was the same man who was in this manner delivered from the jaws of the deep, or that the Ninevites came by their intelligence of this miracle by some other means ; we have here a good reason why they attended to his message, and repented at his preaching, and consequently why God wrought this wonderful work upon him, in order to give his predictions more weight and authority.

(a) Jonah ii. 3.
(d) Wells’s Geography of the New Testament, part ii.
See Bryant’s Observation.]
(e) Psalm cxxv. 6.

(b) Ibid. ver. 2.

(c) Jewish Antiquities, lib. ix. c. 11.
* [Much more probably to Tartessus in Spain.
(f) Acts xxvii. 24. (g) Jonah i. 16.

Nay, farther, we may suppose that, when the people of Nineveh heard Jonah preaching about their streets, and threatening their city with so sudden a destruction, their curiosity would naturally lead them to enquire, who that person was, and by whose authority it was that he “took so much upon him?” And being informed that he was of a nation (a) “which had God more nigh unto them in all things that they called upon him for, and had statutes and judgments more righteous” than any other people upon earth: a nation (b) “to whom (as the apostle expresses it) appertained the adoption, and the glory, and the covenant, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; a nation (c) “which the Lord had taken from the midst of another nation,” had brought out of Egypt and settled in Canaan, “by temptations, by signs, and by wonders, and by war, and by a mighty hand, and by a stretched-out arm, and by great terrors;” and that he in particular was a prophet of this great God, who “had made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that in them is,” and who, for his disobedience in refusing to come upon this errand, had confined him in the deep for three days and nights, but now, upon his humiliation, had set him free from his ghastly prison, and given him courage to speak with so much boldness:—The people, I say, who were informed of all this, could not well fail of giving God the glory due unto his name, for sending a prophet of his favourite nation, and one of so distinguished a character, to give them notice of their impending doom.

(d) “I wrought for my name’s sake,” (says God, remembering the wondrous things which he hath done for the children of Israel) “I wrought for my name’s sake, that it should not be polluted among the heathen, among whom they were, in whose sight I made myself known unto them, in bringing them out of the land of Egypt:” and therefore we may well admit (as another motive to his working this miracle) the desire he had to raise the fame of a nation he had taken so immediately under his care, as well as to have the glory of his own name magnified among the Gentiles. To which we may add, that most weighty reason of all, which our blessed Saviour suggests, (e) “An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign, and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas; for as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale’s belly, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.” So that the great design of God’s exhibiting, at this time, this miracle in the person of Jonah, was to confirm, in future ages, the great and fundamental article of our faith, upon which the whole superstructure of the Christian religion depends, “the resurrection of our Saviour Christ;” and that, whenever the reality of that fact, as it is related in the New Testament, came to be called in question, we might be furnished with a parallel instance of the mighty power of God recorded in the Old.

Nor is it only in the Sacred Records that we meet with this history of Jonah, but in the fables related by several heathen authors, both in verse and prose, we find evident footsteps and memorials of it. Hercules was the great champion of the Grecians, and his fame they were wont to adorn with all the remarkable exploits that they could in any nation hear of. It is not improbable, therefore, (f) that the adventure of his jumping down the throat of the sea-dog, which Neptune had sent to devour him, and there concealing himself for three days, without any manner of hurt, save the loss of a few hairs, which came off by the heat of the creature’s stomach, was founded upon some blind tradition which these people might have of what happened to Jonah. Nor can the known story of Arion, thrown over-board by the seamen, but taken up by a dolphin, and carried safe to Corinth, be justly referred to any other original; since, (g) besides some resemblance in their names, and no great disparity in the times wherein

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(a) Deut. iv. 7, 8.

(b) Rom. ix. 4.

(c) Deut. iv. 34.

(d) Ezek. xx. 9. 14.

(e) Matth. xii. 39, 40.

(f) *Lycophron*, vid. *Grotius* and *Bochart*.

(g) *Huet*. *Demonst*

Evang. Propos. 4. de Prophetâ Jonæ.

From 1 Kings viii. to the end of 2 Chron they lived, (which are both circumstances that make for this hypothesis) the supposed difference in their respective callings can be no manner of objection to it, (a) because the same word in the Hebrew tongue signifies both a *prophet* and a *musician*. And therefore it is remarkable, that, as Arion played the tune, wherewith he charmed and allured the fish to save him, before he jumped over-board; so Jonah, when he found himself safely landed, uttered what is called (b) a prayer indeed, but is, in reality, a lofty hymn, in commemoration of his great deliverance, as appears by this specimen: (c) "The waters compassed me about, even to the soul; the depth closed me round about, and weeds were wrapped about my head. I went down to the bottoms of the mountains; the earth, with her bars, was about me for ever; yet hast thou brought up my life from the pit, O Lord my God."

APPENDIX TO DISSERTATION III.

OF JONAH'S MISSION TO NINEVEH, AND ABODE IN THE WHALE'S BELLY.

[OUR author is perfectly right in his observation, that hardly any thing in the Old or the New Testament has occasioned so much scoffing among those philosophers who are greater masters of ridicule than of logic, as the story of Jonah. In the preceding Dissertation, he has said enough to rescue this piece of Sacred History from their profane grasp; but it may not be unimportant to the cause of truth to shew that the usual objections to this miracle are founded in ignorance as well of the laws of nature as of the Sacred Scriptures; for though one miracle is just as easy to Almighty Power as another—both being the suspension of some law or laws of nature, it is always satisfactory to distinguish, when we can, between what is miraculous in any surprising event, and what is not; and to see the propriety and moral fitness of any miracle for accomplishing the purposes for which it was wrought.

The first objection to this miracle aims at shewing its utter impossibility; for it is said that the gullet of the largest species of *Balaena*, being but four inches in diameter, is too small to let a man pass into the stomach of the monster entire; and we do not read of the gullet of the whale which swallowed Jonah being miraculously enlarged for the purpose. It is true we read nothing of this; and for two very good reasons, of which the first is, that it was not probably the common whale of the arctic circle that swallowed the prophet; and the second, that, though the gullet of a dead whale, which alone these men of science have measured, be no more than four inches in diameter, it does not follow that the live animal has not the power of dilating its gullet to ten times four inches, when it has occasion to swallow any thing of magnitude. Few facts, I believe, in zoology, are better ascertained than that the *Boa Constrictor* can so dilate its gullet as to swallow an entire man, stag, or tyger; and yet no person who has merely seen the specimens of these monstrous serpents, which are preserved in the different museums in Europe, and is a stranger to the history of the living animal, would think this possible, even with all the allowance that can be made for the effect of the previous breaking of the bones of the man or beast that is to be swallowed. Yet the fact is unquestionable; and how do we know but that the common whale has a similar power of dilating its gullet?

(a) *Huetius*, *ibid.*

(b) *Jonah* ii. 2.

(c) *Ibid.* ver. 5, 6.

But there is no reason to believe that the common whale was the fish employed to chastise the rebellious prophet; for the original words denote any large fish of the order of *Cete*, and are therefore properly translated by the LXX κῆτι μεγάλη, as they are, in our version, *a great fish*, without reference to any order. Now the *shark* is a great fish of the order of *Cete*, in whose stomach have been found not only fishes, but even the bodies of men, entire; and sharks are frequent in the Mediterranean sea, which was to be the scene of Jonah's flight from the presence of the Lord. To the hypothesis that it might be a shark and not a whale which swallowed the wayward prophet, it is usually objected that the large shark is so very ferocious, and has its jaws so thoroughly armed with large and sharp teeth, that Jonah must have been eaten by that *Cetus*, and not swallowed alive and entire; but this, though a common, is a very idle objection. No man ever supposed, or could suppose, that Jonah was preserved otherwise than by the miraculous interposition of Providence; for we are expressly told that "God had prepared a great fish (וימן יהיה דג גדול, Και προσέταξεν Κύριος κῆτι μεγάλη, et præparavit Dominus piscem grandem) to swallow up Jonah;" and therefore we may be sure that the fish prepared, whether *shark* or *whale*, was miraculously prevented both from tearing and crushing him to death. Indeed the voracity of that animal, and its eagerness to devour its prey, might naturally have this effect, especially in a stormy sea and near the shore, where we may suppose the *shark* to have been in the utmost hurry to save itself*, and yet unwilling to lose its prey.

But supposing Jonah to be swallowed, without being killed, by the sea monster, how was he to be preserved from the action of the stomach? To this the answer is ready and satisfactory. Dr Mosely has ascertained by the most decisive experiments, that digestion in fishes is not produced either by trituration or by the heat of the stomach. Though nature has furnished the *shark* with a stomach of wonderful force and thickness, far exceeding that of any other creature, it is evident that digestion in them is not performed by trituration; for on any alarm, their young always retreat into the stomach of their dam as into a place of refuge; and that it is not by heat that the food of fishes is digested, is equally indisputable. Being on the banks of Newfoundland in August 1782, the Doctor cut up the stomachs of many cod-fish just as they came alive out of the water; and in them, says he, "I generally found small oysters, muscles, cockles, and crabs, as well as small fishes of their own and other species. The coldness of the stomach of these fishes is far greater than the temperature of the water out of which they are taken, or of any other part of the fish, or of any other substance of animated nature I ever felt. On wrapping one of them round my hand, immediately on being taken out of the fish, it caused so much aching and numbness that I could not endure it long (a)." It must therefore be by some *gastric juice* or *menstruum*, that digestion is carried on in fishes, as in most terrestrial animals; but it is a fact well ascer-

* [Mr Parkhurst, under the word ΚΗΤΟΣ, treating of this very subject, says—"It is notorious, that *sharks* are a species of fish common in the Mediterranean; and we are assured not only that some of this kind are of such a size and make as to be capable, without any miracle at all, of swallowing a man, but that *whole men* have been actually found in their bellies." (stomachs). In proof of this fact he refers, in a note, to Bochart, vol. iii. p. 745, and then says—"To this I add a remark or two from other writers. Thus then the learned authors of the Universal History, vol. x. p. 554, note B, 8vo edit. The word here used (Mat. xii. 40.) signifies no more a *whale* than any other large fish that has fins; and there is one commonly known in the Mediterranean, by the name of the *carcharias*, of the bigness of a *whale*, but with

such a large throat and belly (stomach), as is able to swallow the largest man whole. There was one of this kind caught within these thirty years or more on the coasts of Portugal, in whose throat, when stretched out, a man could stand upright." So Mons. Pluche, speaking of the *shark*, says, "It has a very long gullet, and in the belly of it are oftentimes found the bodies of men half eaten, and sometimes whole and entire. *Nature Displayed*, vol. iii. p. 140. small ed. and Kolben mentions a species of *shark* at the Cape of Good Hope, whose jaws are so large, and its gullet so wide, that it may easily be believed he can swallow a full dressed man. *Nat. Hist. of the Cape*."—Greek and English Lexicon.

(a) See Encyclopædia Britannica, Ed. 3d. article SQUALUS,

A. M. 3001, tained, that no animal substance, whilst the principle of life remains in it, can be digested by the fluid usually existing in the stomachs of other animals.
&c. or 4654.

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“Animals, or parts of animals, possessed of the *living principle* when taken into the stomach, are not, says an eminent physiologist (*a*), in the least affected by the powers of that viscus, so long as the animal principle remains. Thence it is that we find animals of various kinds living in the stomach, or even hatched and bred there; but the moment that any of these lose the living principle, they become subject to the digestive power of the stomach. *If it were possible for a man's hand, for example, to be introduced into the stomach of a living animal, and kept there for some considerable time, it would be found that the dissolvent powers of the stomach could have no effect upon it; but, if the same hand were separated from the body, and introduced into the same stomach, we should then find that the stomach would immediately act upon it. Indeed, if this were not the case, we should find that the stomach itself ought to have been made of indigestible materials; for, if the living principle were not capable of preserving animal substances from undergoing that process, the stomach itself would be digested. But we find, on the contrary, that the stomach, which at one instant, that is, while possessed of the living principle, was capable of resisting the digestive powers which it contained, the next moment, viz. when deprived of the living principle, is itself capable of being digested, either by the digestive power of other stomachs, or by the remains of that power which it had of digesting other things.*”

“Consistently with these observations of Mr Hunter's, we find, says Mr King (*b*), that smaller fishes have been taken alive out of the stomachs of fishes of prey; and (not having been killed by any bite or otherwise) have survived their being devoured, and swam away well recovered, and very little affected by the digesting fluid.” Of this kind, as he adds, there are two instances mentioned by Dr Plot, in his history of Staffordshire (*c*); and many others might be produced.

But though Jonah might have escaped from the digestive powers of the stomach of the fish, it has been said to be impossible that he could live three days and three nights, or half that period of time, in the midst of foul air, or without air at all. This, however, is, like the former part of the objection, the offspring of ignorance of the laws of nature, combined with inattention to the nature of the case before us. It is admitted by almost every anatomist of eminence, Mr Cheselden excepted, that the *foramen ovale*, by which the blood circulates in the fœtus, is sometimes, though rarely, found open in adults; and that no person who has it open, could be either drowned or killed by mere suffocation. In proof of this Dr Derham produces many instances (*d*), of which the case of Anne Green, who was hanged at Oxford in 1650, cannot be called in question; now, if Jonah was one of those anomalous beings, he might, according to the ordinary laws of nature, live all the time that he is said to have lived in the fish's stomach, and at last be disgorged alive and uninjured. I do not say that this was actually the case, for, as I have already observed, we must admit the miraculous interposition of Providence, or reject the story altogether; but if there be any man, who thinks that the laws of nature must be, as much as possible, observed even in a miraculous operation, we may surely suppose, that God, to whom all things have been for ever present, chose Jonah to be his messenger to Nineveh, for this, among other reasons, that his *foramen ovale* was open, which would render him of course incapable of perishing by mere suffocation ‡.

(*a*) Mr John Hunter in the Philosophical Transactions, vol. lxii. p. 449.

(*b*) *Morsels of Criticism* 8vo. Ed. vol. 2. p. 405.

(*c*) *Ibid.* Page 246.

(*d*) Physico Theology, book iv. chap. vii. Note towards the end.

‡ I am no anatomist, and therefore feel it to be my duty to say, that Cheselden affirms, that the mere

opening of the *foramen ovale* would not be sufficient to preserve any animal from suffocation, unless the *ductus arteriosus* were open likewise. But why might they not both be open in Jonah; and at all events, Anne Green of Oxford certainly survived, and bore children, from whatever secondary or physical cause, after every possible effort was made to kill her by strangulation.

And this leads me to the second objection usually urged against this part of the Sacred History, which is,

From 1 Kings
viii. to the end
of 2 Chron.

Why was a man chosen to deliver a message from God to the great city of Nineveh, whose religious principles were so very absurd as to lead him to suppose that he could flee from the presence of the Creator and Governor of the universe, and whose dispositions were so rebellious as to make him unwilling to execute a commission the most honourable that could be entrusted to man? This is, in truth, the most plausible objection that has ever been urged to the story; but it is by no means unanswerable. Isaiah was indeed Jonah's contemporary at least for some part of their lives; and there is no reason to suppose that he would have hesitated to deliver to the king and people of Nineveh any message with which God had entrusted him, far less that he would have thought of fleeing from the presence of the Lord! But notwithstanding this, I am decidedly of opinion that Jonah was a more proper messenger to Nineveh than even Isaiah would have been, for nearly the same reason that the predictions and blessings reluctantly pronounced by Balaam, must have had a greater effect on the king of Moab and the elders of Midian, than the same predictions and blessings would have had if pronounced by Moses, or even by Jethro the father-in-law of Moses, though he was a Midianite, as Balaam probably was.

In the days of Jonah, the whole kingdom of Israel was deeply infected with idolatry, and idolatry of the worst species. He was himself a native of *Gath Hepher*, which the best ancient geographers place in the province afterwards called Galilee of the nations—a province of which the inhabitants were a mixed people, all more or less attached to the gods of the countries, from which they had originally come. That he had himself no correct notions of the attributes of the God of Israel, is evident from his thinking it possible, by crossing the sea, to flee from the presence of Jehovah. The grossness of the conceptions of the Israelites was such, at the giving of the law, and for many generations afterwards, that God judged it expedient to exhibit himself to them as a local tutelary deity, so far at least as to say (a),—"If ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a *peculiar treasure to me above all people*;" but, to prevent them from confounding his nature with that of the tutelary deities of the heathen, whose power was not supposed to extend beyond their respective provinces, he immediately adds,—“for all the earth is mine.” In the kingdom of Israel, the law was little read and less regarded; and Jonah, if he ever knew this distinction between the extent of the dominion of the God of Israel, and extent of the supposed dominion of the gods of the surrounding nations, appears to have forgotten it. He probably believed Jehovah to be more powerful than any one of the other gods, and his power to extend, in some degree, over the other nations of the continent; but he seems to have been satisfied, that if he could get across the sea, he would be out of Jehovah's presence, and therefore escape his vengeance for disobeying a command, which probably presented itself to his imagination as something which could not be executed without involving him in the greatest danger.

No man in that age, however wicked he might be, appears to have taken refuge from the stings of conscience or the dread of Divine vengeance, in *atheism*. When such a person thought himself abandoned by the tutelary deity of his own family or nation, or when he had reason to believe that he had provoked the anger of that god, he applied for protection to some other deity of the same description; and this was exactly the case of Jonah. As he considered Jehovah as a mere *local god*, from whose presence it was possible to flee, there is no reason to doubt, but that he had, for some time at least, been one of those Israelites, then abounding in the nation, who “feared the Lord and served other gods, who feared the Lord, and served their graven images;” and if so, it was natural for him, in the then state of his affairs, to put himself under the protection

(a) Exod. xix. 5.

A. M. 3001.
&c. or 1654.
Ant. Chris.
1003, &c.
or 757.

of the tutelary god of some of his Gentile neighbours; and, as he was to cross the sea, to select, for his patron and protector, the god whom the winds and waves were supposed to obey.

With his head probably full of these notions, "Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of Jehovah, and with this view went down to Joppa. And he found a ship going to Tarshish; so he paid the fare thereof, and went down into it to go with them to Tarshish, from the presence of the Lord." (a) Every one knows that *Joppa*, now *Jaffa*, was a sea-port town of Palestine on the shore of the Mediterranean; and the object of the prophet in embarking there, appears plainly to have been to proceed to some very distant region westward, that he might get as far as possible from Nineveh, and the presence of the Lord! As he had deserted the God of Israel, we may suppose, that on his arrival at Joppa, he put himself under the protection of the deity of the place, made his oblations at the altar, and worshipped at the shrine. But the late learned Mr Bryant has sufficiently proved, (b) that the chief object of worship at Joppa was *Venus-piscis*, *Atargatis*, or *Derceto*; that the same deity, which in some places was considered as a male, and in others as a female, was always represented by the figure of a large fish, with the head and breasts of a man or woman growing out of its mouth; and this deity, whether considered male or female, * is always represented as the sovereign of the seas, to whom the winds and waves paid passive obedience. Indeed the idolatrous worship of the Cetus or Ceto appears to have been of the most remote antiquity, and to have prevailed over almost all the East; for that such an idol was worshipped among the Assyrians and Babylonians, the account which Berosus gives of the intelligent animal called *Oannes*, which in the reign of the first Alorus came out of the *Red Sea*, and appeared near Babylonia, leaves no room for doubt. That animal, he says, had the entire body of a fish, with the head of a man beneath the fish's head, and with human feet which came out of the fish's tail; (c) and the first Indian Avatar in which Veeshnou is represented in the form of a fish blazing with gold, and extending a million of leagues, is a proof that the same species of idolatry prevailed at a very early period in Hindoostan (d). Under the shelter and sanction of this monstrous deity—the god or goddess of Joppa, the apostate prophet thought to elude the all-seeing eye of Providence.

"But, says Mr Bryant, *the Lord sent out a great wind into the sea, and there was a mighty tempest* Every person called upon his god, and those of Joppa must have applied to their marine deity, the Cetus, but they could obtain no help. They suspected that some body under a curse was on board; and that this evil came upon them for affording him shelter. They therefore cast lots of enquiry, and the lot fell upon Jonah. Confirmed in their opinion that he was some devoted person, they asked him strictly about his occupation and country, and for what cause this evil had come upon them. He told them that he was, by nation, a Hebrew, and that he feared *the Lord God of heaven, who had made the sea and the dry land*; whom, however, he had deserted, and from whose presence he had endeavoured to flee. He possibly may have added, that he had, in consequence of it, put himself under the protection of another power, the deity of Joppa, who was supposed to rule both the winds and the waves. *Then were the men exceedingly afraid*; and they had particular reason so to be; for they found that the tempest which prevailed was raised by the God of Israel, whom they did not serve; and that all the deities to whom they had applied, could not allay it. The superiority therefore of the God of Israel over the god of Joppa was manifest. *Then said they un-*

(a) Jonah i. 3. (b) *Observations upon some passages in Scripture*, part. iv. * Dagon was a male at Ashdod or Azotus; but the same marine deity appears to have been considered as a goddess at Joppa. (c) See *Hales's Analysis*, &c. vol. iii. p. 10. (d) *Maurice's Indian Antiquities*, vol. ii. p. 261, and *Asiat. Research*, vol. i.

to him, *What shall we do unto thee, that the sea may be calm unto us?—And he said unto them, Take me up, and cast me forth into the sea; so shall the sea be calm unto you.* This he must have said by a Divine cogency—*Διὸ πνευστος*; otherwise he could not have been so certain of the consequences.” With much reluctance, and after rowing hard to carry the ship back to the port from which she had sailed, the mariners ‘took up Jonah, and cast him forth into the sea, and the sea ceased from its raging.’ Then the men feared the Lord greatly, and offered sacrifices unto the Lord, and made vows. These vows we may imagine to have been, that they would for the future reverence the true God, whom the winds and seas obeyed, and not put their trust in their national deities, whose inferiority had been so manifest, and in whom there was no help.”

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If this was the case, and it could not be otherwise, here was one important object—the conversion of the idolatrous mariners and other passengers on board the ship—gained by this tremendous miracle. “But before they could have offered any sacrifice (though the fact is mentioned afterwards), *the Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah.* This, we may presume, was done immediately, when the prophet was cast over board into the sea; and consequently the mariners in the ship must to their astonishment have seen the process. They must have beheld a real leviathan of the deep acting as an instrument of heaven, against which their imaginary and emblematical deity had no power. Neither Dagon, nor Atargatis, nor Oannes of Babylon, nor Veeshnou of Hindoostan, nor Ceto of Joppa, could prevent one of the community, and a votary, from being entombed in the body of this monster.”

Had the process indeed stopt here, the devouring of Jonah by the *great fish* in the presence of the mariners, might have had a tendency to confirm them in their base worship of Derceto rather than to convert them to the worship of the God of Israel. If they possessed any portion of that perverse obstinacy, which characterises modern unbelievers in general, they would undoubtedly have concluded, from witnessing so tremendous a scene, and the calm by which it was instantly succeeded, that their deity was the great power which Jonah had offended; that she had therefore stirred up a tempest in the ocean, to avenge herself on this occasional worshipper of Jehovah; and that as soon as she had accomplished that object, she took compassion on her faithful adherents; but the conclusion of the scene rendered it impossible to make seriously such reflections as these.

“As the mariners, to use the words of Bryant, had laboured for a while to gain the land, but were prevented; we may suppose that after the storm was over, they returned in their shattered vessel to their haven at Joppa, and there gave a full account of this wonderful event. The prophet, too, after he had been for an appointed time consigned to a death-like darkness in the body of the fish, was brought to light, and freed from his imprisonment.” The Scripture indeed does not expressly say that the ship returned to the haven of Joppa, nor that the prophet was restored to the *same coast* and among the *same people*, from which he had set out on his disastrous voyage; but there can be no doubt but that such was the case. The storm appears to have come on immediately after the ship left the harbour; she was like to have been broken in pieces by its violence; and as the mariners had rowed hard to bring her to land, whilst it lasted, they would surely bring her to the nearest land which they could make. Jonah too was still to be sent on his embassy to Nineveh; and it is not conceivable that the fish should be guided with her cargo to a coast, whence the prophet could not, without another voyage, reach that city. On the coast near Joppa therefore “the Cetus was undoubtedly stranded; and in its last efforts and agonies, within view of the temple of Derceto, it disgorged the apostate prophet. This afforded a salutary lesson to the people of the place.” If any of them had been induced by the narrative of the mariners to infer that the storm had been raised and made to cease by the power of their god or goddess, such an inference must have been completely done away by this last event, which exhibited

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the emblem of the divinity which they adored as the mere instrument employed by the God of Israel to carry his designs into effect. The prophet, who had deserted the God of his fathers, and placed himself under the protection of the gods of Joppa, they had seen swallowed up by the greatest of these gods; and though they might at first suppose that this was done to punish him for his occasionally worshipping the God of Israel, they could think so no longer, after seeing the monster disgorge him uninjured, and perish itself. They saw him likewise set out on his mission to Nineveh to preach against the enormous wickedness of the people, and against the worship of all such gods as Derceto; and if, by this, they were not convinced that Jehovah was the only God, it is impossible that they could longer doubt of his superiority over their gods, or of his being indeed **GOD OF GODS** and **LORD OF LORDS**.

But it was not on the people of Joppa and its neighbourhood only that these miracles must have had a salutary effect. "May we not," says Dr Hales, (a) "attribute the *immediate* influence and authority of *Jonah's* preaching on the *Ninevites*, after his miraculous deliverance from the *great fish*, to their thinking that he came in the spirit and power of *Oannes* as an ambassador from God?" I think, we may safely attribute to some notion of this kind, their giving him at *first* a *patient hearing*; but when they came to learn from him the whole truth, as undoubtedly they did learn it, and had that truth confirmed, as they would surely make inquiry, by all the inhabitants of Joppa and its neighbourhood, they would soon come to suspect that all their traditionary stories of *Oannes* were either absurd fables, or gross corruptions of some ancient truths; and there can be little doubt, but that, for a time at least, the worship of the Ninevites would be chiefly if not solely paid to the God of Israel. Thus we see that the perverseness of Jonah, and even his propensity to worship the gods of the heathen, made him a much fitter instrument, than Isaiah or any other pious and virtuous prophet could have been in the hands of the true God, to give a check to the progress of idolatry and vice both in Nineveh and at Joppa. This miracle therefore had the greatest moral fitness possible for diffusing the knowledge of the true God through the world—the very purpose, for which not only all such miracles appear to have been wrought, but for which the children of Israel were kept distinct from other nations.]

(a) *Analysis*, &c. vol. iii. p. 11. Note †.

CHAPTER IV.

FROM THE DEATH OF UZZIAH TO THE DEATH OF JOSIAH KING OF JUDAH.

THE HISTORY.

THE interregnum, † or vacancy in the throne of Israel, which lasted for two and twenty years and upwards, occasioned so general a confusion, that the people at length came to a resolution to place Zechariah, the son of Jeroboam, and the fourth †² and last of Jehu's line, upon the throne. This happened in the eight and thirtieth year of Uz-ziah king of Judah; but as he proved a wicked prince, and followed the steps of his ancestors, he did not live long to enjoy the government; for at the end of six months he was murdered by Shallum, who usurped the throne, but enjoyed it no longer than one month. For Menahem, general of the king's forces which were then besieging Tir-zah, hearing of what Shallum had done, immediately raised the siege, and, marching directly to Samaria, defeated and slew Shallum; and, by the power and authority of the army, placed himself upon the throne. Not long after this, he returned with his army to Tirzah †³; but the inhabitants refusing to open the gates, he took the place by

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† This interregnum some chronologers make longer and some shorter, according as they suppose that Zechariah reigned, more or less, in conjunction with his father: But that there was manifestly a vacancy in the throne of Israel for the time assigned, is evident from hence:—That Jeroboam the 1st, who began to reign in the fifteenth year of Amaziah king of Judah, died in the fifteenth year of Uz-ziah, and that his son Zechariah began not to reign till the eight and thirtieth year of the said Uz-ziah; so that there was plainly all this interregnum; but whence it was occasioned, whether by foreign wars, or rather by domestic confusions (as appears by the unfortunate end of the successors), we are no where told. *Patrick's Commentary*.

†² God had promised Jehu, that, for executing his will upon the house of Ahab, he would continue the crown of Israel in his family for four generations; and accordingly, Jehoahaz, Joash, Jehoram, and Zechariah, succeeded him: But because he did it, not so much in obedience to the Divine command, as to satisfy his private and ambitious views, and in a me-

thod of cruelty quite abhorrent to the Divine nature, God cut his family short as soon as he had fulfilled his promise to him, and thereby accomplished the prophecy of Hosea, “I will avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu, and will cause to cease the kingdom of the house of Israel,” chap. i. 4. and perhaps it was in remembrance of this prophecy, as well as of the promise, which confined the kingdoms in Jehu's family to four generations only, 2 Kings xv. 10. that Shallum was encouraged to attempt the life of Zechariah. *Patrick's Commentary* and *Pool's Annotations*.

†³ This is a place we find frequent mention of in the Sacred Records, because it was a long time the regal city of the kingdom of Israel, after that the ten tribes had revolted from the house of David. Jeroboam, who was the first king of Israel (though he dwelt for some time in Shechem), in his latter days, at least, resided here, as did all the other kings of Israel; until Omri, having reigned six years in Tir-zah, built Samaria, and removed the royal seat thither, where it continued until a final period was put

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storm, and so having spoiled it, and laid all the country waste as far as Tiphzah, he came and sat down before it: But when the people of Tiphzah, in like manner, refused to open their gates, and submit to him, without distinction of age or sex, he put them all to the sword, and, in short, was so barbarously cruel, as to * rip up the very women that were with child.

Pul, † king of Assyria, taking the advantage of these distractions, marched with an army, and invaded the kingdom of Israel on the other side of Jordan, which lay nearest to Babylon: But Menahem, by a present of three thousand talents of silver, which he raised out of the wealthiest of his subjects, prevailed with him, not only to withdraw his forces, but to recognize his title likewise to the crown of Israel, before he left the kingdom; which was one great reason, that he held the quiet possession of it for the space of ten years, and, in the fiftieth year of Uzziah king of Judah, died, and †² was succeeded in it by his son Pekahiah.

to that kingdom. Now the reason which induced the first kings of Israel to make Tirzah the place of their residence, may be gathered from that expression in Canticles, "Thou art beautiful, O my love, as Tirzah," chap. vi. 4. which certainly implies, that Tirzah was a beautiful and pleasant city to dwell in. But how famous and beautiful a place soever this city was, we have no certain account of its situation; only it is supposed by most, that as Jeroboam was of the tribe of Ephraim, he would be naturally inclined to make choice of a place within the compass of his tribe for his royal city: And this opinion is thought to receive some confirmation from the word Ephraim's being frequently used to denote the whole kingdom of Israel, even because its capital city was situated in that tribe. However this be, it is pretty plain from the circumstances of the story, that the Tiphzah, where Menahem exercised so much cruelty, was not the town of that name which lay upon the Euphrates, mentioned in 1 Kings iv. 21. as one of the boundaries of Solomon's dominion, but some place not far from Tirzah, and consequently, very probably in the tribe of Ephraim. *Wells's Geography of the Old Testament*, vol. iii.

* Josephus does not indeed make mention of this particular instance of his unrelenting cruelty, but this he tells us, that, "when he had taken the town, he put all to the sword, without sparing a man, woman, or child; and that he exercised such merciless rigour and inhumanity towards his own countrymen, as would have been unpardonable even to the worst of barbarians." But by these methods he thought, no doubt, to terrify the whole kingdom, so that none might dare to withstand him. *Jewish Antiq.* lib. ix. c. 11. and *Patrick's Commentary*.

† This is the first time that we find any mention made of the kingdom of Assyria since the days of Nimrod, who erected a small principality there, Gen. x. 11. and Pul, or Phul, is the first monarch of that nation who invaded Israel, and began their transportation out of their country. Some are of opinion, that he was the same with Belesis, the governor of Babylon, who, together with Arbaces the Mede, slew Sardanapulus, the last of the Assyrian monarchs, and translated the empire to the Chaldeans. Our excel-

lent Patrick seems to be confident in this: But according to our learned Prideaux, Belesis was one generation later; and therefore it is supposed, that this Pul was the father of Sardanapalus, who was called Sardon with the annexion of his father's name Pul, in the same manner as Merodach, king of Babylon, was called Merodach-baladan, because he was the son of Baladan. This Pul therefore was the same king of Assyria, who, when Jonah preached against Nineveh, gave great tokens of his humiliation and repentance; [or, as Dr Hales more probably thinks, the son of that king.] The only difficulty is, that he seems to have marched his army from Babylon, and not from Nineveh, and yet his son and successor we find lived at Nineveh. But then it is suggested, that, as the kings of Assyria resided sometimes at Babylon and sometimes at Nineveh, it is not improbable that Pul, to avoid the judgments which Jonah threatened against the latter, might remove to Babylon, where he resided the remaining part of his reign; and this made it so convenient for him to attack the Israelites on the other side of Jordan. *Prideaux's Connection*, anno 747. and *Bedford's Scripture Chronology*, lib. vi.

†² This shews that Menahem was a man of great weight and consideration; since, notwithstanding all his violence and cruelty, he left the kingdom in his own family, which his two predecessors could not do. It is manifest, however, that there was a small interregnum of about a year's continuance between his death and his son's accession; for his son did not begin to reign till the fiftieth year of Uzziah, and yet he must have been dead the year before, because it is said of him, 2 Kings xv. that he began to reign in the thirty-ninth of Uzziah, and reigned but ten years. There was therefore apparently an interregnum; but what the occasion of it was, it is not so well known; though there is room to suppose, that it proceeded from the interest of his successor, who might raise a party to keep him out of the throne, as he did afterwards to deprive him both of that and life. For (according to Josephus) "He was cut to pieces, with several of his friends about him, at a public feast, by the treasonable practice of Pekah, one of his principal officers, who, seizing upon the government, reigned about twenty years, and left it at last a difficult

Pekahiah, however, did not reign above two years before he was murdered in his royal palace by Pekah, the general of his army, who, in the last year of Uzziah, usurped the crown, and wore it for twenty years, but not without much disquiet and perplexity. For, after that Tilgath-Pileser, † king of Assyria, had several times invaded his kingdom, taken his cities, ravaged the country, and carried away great numbers of his subjects captive, Hoshea, †² the son of Elah, murdered Pekah (as he had murdered his predecessor), and, after an interregnum of nine [or according to Hales ten] years, thrust himself into the throne; but it was not long before he found that his usurpation was attended with many incumbrances.

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Shalmaneser, who, in the fourteenth year of Ahaz king of Judah, succeeded his father Tilgath-Pileser in the kingdom of Assyria, invaded his country, and having subdued Samaria, made him promise to become his vassal, and to pay him an annual tribute. For some time Hoshea sent his presents, and his tribute-money very punctually; but having entered into a confederacy with So †³ king of Egypt, by his assistance he hoped to be able to shake off the Assyrian yoke, and therefore withdrew his subjection, and would pay no more tribute; whereupon Shalmaneser †⁴ marched with an army against him, and having subdued all the country round, and amassed a * great quantity of rich prey, he came and sat down before Samaria. The town held out for three years; but being at length compelled to surrender, Shalmaneser quite demolished it. He took Hoshea

question to determine, ‘Whether he was more remarkable for his impiety towards God, or for his injustice towards men?’ *Joseph. Antiq.* lib. ix. c. 11. and *Bedford’s Scripture Chronology*, lib. vi.

† He is supposed by some to have been the son and successor of Sardanapalus, who restored the kingdom of Assyria, and possessed it, after it had been dismembered by Belesis and Arbaces; but our learned Prideaux (who begins his excellent “Connection of the History of the Old and New Testaments” at this period) makes him to be the same with Arbaces, by Ælian called Thilgamus, and by Castor, Ninus Junior; who, together with Belesis, headed the conspiracy against Sardanapalus, and fixed his royal seat at Nineveh, the ancient residence of the Assyrian kings, as Belesis (who in Scripture is likewise called Bala-dan, Isaiah xxxix. 1.) did his at Babylon, and there governed his new-erected empire for nineteen years. [All this however seems to be a complication of mistakes. Newton more probably conjectures, that *Tiglath-pileser* was the elder son of *Pul*, whom he succeeded in the sovereignty of Assyria; and that *Nabonassar*, *Pul*’s younger son, was by their father invested in the prefecture of Babylon. *Pul* is supposed by Dr Hales to have been the second *Belus* of the Greeks, who built the temple of that name at *Babylon*, and, like the first, was deified after his death.] *Prideaux’s Connection*, anno 747; and *Hales’s Analysis*, &c. vol. iii. p. 60.

†² After he had murdered his predecessor Pekah, the elders of the land seem to have taken the government into their own hands; for he had not the possession of the kingdom till the latter end of the twelfth year of Ahaz, i. e. about nine years after he had committed the fact. He came to the crown (it must be owned) in a very wicked manner, and yet his character in Scripture is not so vile as many of his

predecessors, 2 Kings xvii. 2. For, whereas the kings of Israel had hitherto maintained guards upon the frontiers, to hinder their subjects from going to Jerusalem to worship, Hoshea took away these guards, and gave free liberty to all to go and pay their adorations where the law had directed. And therefore, when Hezekiah invited all Israel to come to his pass-over, this prince permitted all that would to go; and when, upon their return from that festival, they destroyed all the monuments of idolatry that were found in the kingdom of Samaria, instead of forbidding them, in all probability he gave his consent to it; because, without some tacit encouragement at least, they durst not have ventured to do it. *Prideaux’s Connection*, anno 729.

†³ This So, with whom Hoshea entered into confederacy, is, in profane authors, called Sabacon, that famous Ethiopian mentioned by Herodotus and Diodorus Siculus, who, in the beginning of Hezekiah’s reign, invaded Egypt, and having taken Boccharis the king thereof prisoner, had him, in great cruelty, burnt alive, and then seized on his kingdom. *Prideaux’s Connection*, Anno 726.

†⁴ Salmaneser (who in Tobit i. 2. is called Enemessar, and in Hosea x. 14. Shalman) was the son and successor of Arbaces, or Tiglath-pileser, and according to Josephus, (who has quoted a passage from Menander) there is mention made of him, and of his conquest over the land of Israel, in the history of the Tyrians. *Jewish Antiquities*, lib. ix. c. 14.

* In this expedition, among other rich things which he took and carried away, was the golden calf which Jeroboam had set up at Bethel, which ever since his time had been worshipped by the ten tribes that had revolted with him from the house of David, as the other golden calf which he, at the same time, set up at Dan, had been taken thence about ten

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and put him in chains, and shut him up in prison all his days; and having † carried the people into captivity, and placed them in the north parts of Assyria, and in the cities of the Medes, he sent several colonies of his own subjects from Babylon and other provinces, to replenish the land: but being too few for this purpose, and withal very wicked and idolatrous people, the Divine Providence permitted lions, †² and other wild beasts, to multiply upon them to such a degree, that they were forced to make a representation thereof at the Assyrian court, viz. "That, being ignorant of the manner wherein they were to worship the god of the country, they supposed that this affliction was sent upon them; and therefore they humbly prayed, that some priests of the Jewish nation might be sent to instruct them in that particular." This accordingly was done: but as these colonies consisted of a mixture of different nations and provinces, they joined the worship of the true God with that of the several idols of the countries from whence they came; so that one might have seen the people who came from Babylon worshipping Succoth-Benoth †³; the men of Cuthath †⁴ praying to Nergal †⁵; those of Hamath †⁶

years before, by his father Tiglath-pileser, when he invaded Galilee, the province wherein that city stood. *Prideaux's Connection*, Anno 729.

† The policy of any prince in transplanting a conquered people into another country, is to prevent their combining together, (which they cannot so well do in a strange land, and among a mixed multitude of different languages) in order to shake off their uneasy yoke, and recover their liberty. *Le Clerc's Commentary*.

†² Josephus, in this part of the history, takes the liberty to alter the sense of the sacred text; for instead of the increase of lions which destroyed the people, he tells us, "that they were visited with a dreadful plague, so that the place was in a manner quite depopulated by it." But allowing it to be lions, why should these new inhabitants be afflicted with these creatures "for not fearing the Lord," 2 Kings xvii. 25. when the Israelites, who feared the Lord as little as they, were never infested with any such thing? The Israelites indeed were addicted to idolatry, but then they did not deny the Divine power and providence; only they imagined that their idols were the intermediate causes, whereby the blessings of the supreme God might be conveyed to them; whereas these new comers believed the idols that they worshipped to be true gods, and had no conceptions higher. They had no notion of one Eternal, Almighty, and Independent Being. The God of Israel they took to be such an one as their own, a topical god, whose power and care extended no farther than to one particular nation or people; and therefore, to rectify their sentiments in this particular, he took this method to let them know, that all the beasts of the forest were his, and that whenever he is incensed with a people, he wants no instruments to execute his wrath; the air, the earth, the elements, and creatures of any kind, can avenge him, and punish them. *Jewish Antiquities*, lib. ix. c. 14. and *Calmet's Commentary*.

†³ Among the great variety of conjectures, it is difficult to tell, what we are properly to understand by these abstruse words. The Jewish doctors will have them to signify "an hen and chickens, but for what reason it is hardly conceivable. Others rather

think them that celestial constellation called Pleiades, which the Babylonians, who were greatly addicted to astronomy, might possibly worship. Some think them the name of a city, which the Babylonians built in Samaria; and others, a particular deity whom they adored: But since the words plainly import the "tabernacle of daughters; or young maidens," they may be most properly referred to those infamous places, where all the young women were obliged, once in their lives, to prostitute themselves to any that asked the favour, in honour of the goddess Milytta, who in other nations is called Venus. Herodotus, in Clio, lib. 1. gives us an account of this abominable custom at large; and it is not improbable that these Babylonians might bring it along with them into the country of Samaria. *Calmet's Dictionary*, under the word; *Selden*, de Diis Syriis Syntag. ii. c. 7. *Vossius*, de Idololat. lib. ii. c. 22. and *Jurieu Histoire des Dogmes*, &c. part iv. c. 8.

†⁴ A province of Assyria, which (as some say) lies upon the Araxes; but others rather think it to be the same with Cush, which is said by Moses to be encompassed by the river Gihon, and must therefore be the same with the country which the Greeks call Susiana, and which, to this very day, is called by the inhabitants Chusestan. *Wells's Geography of the Old Testament*, vol. iii.

†⁵ The Rabbins, who are followed therein by some other interpreters, think that this deity is worshipped under the shape of a woodcock; but as the word *Ner* signifies a *Lamp*, others (with better reason) have imagined, that the Cuthites, who were afterwards called Persians, adored fire, and in honour of the sun (in the same manner as the Persians did) kept a perpetual fire burning upon their altars. *Calmet's Dictionary* under the word, and *Patrick's Commentary*.

†⁶ There are several cities and countries which go under this name; but what we take here to be meant is, that province of Syria that lies upon the Orontes, wherein there was a city of the same name, which, when Shalmaneser had taken, he removed the inhabitants from thence into Samaria (at distance enough, as he thought) to prevent their raising any fresh commotion. • *Calmet's Commentary*.

setting up Ashima†; the Avites†² adoring Nibhaz†³ and Tartak; and those of Sepharvaim†⁴, prostrate before Adrammelech†⁵ and Anammalech; and all this going on with the service of the God of Israel, made a strange and unaccountable medley of religion.

From 1 Kings viii. to the end of 2 Chron.

This was the end of the Israelitish kingdom, after it had subsisted above two hundred and fifty-six years, and the beginning of that mungrel people, which went afterwards under the name of Samaritan. Among the captive Israelites that were carried away by Shalmaneser,†⁶ we have an account of Tobit, of the tribe of Naphtali, who mar-

† Some of the Jewish doctors say, that this Syrian god was worshipped under the shape of an ape, others of a lamb, others of a goat, others of a satyr, and others in the figure wherein the poets represent the god Pan. They who made an ape of this idol-god, seem to have some regard to the sound of the word sima, which has an analogy to the Greek simia; but the Hebrews, it is very well known, have another word to denote an ape, which, together with the goat, was properly an Egyptian deity. The Syrians, however, adored the sun, under the appellation of Elah-Gabalah, from whence the emperor Heliogabalus (who instituted that worship with so much magnificence in Rome) took his name; and therefore, as Asuman, or Suman, in the Persian language, signifies *heaven*, the Syrians might from hence derive the name of their god, who was represented by a large stone pillar, terminating in a conic, or pyramidal figure, whereby they denoted fire. *Calmet's* Commentary, and Dictionary, under the word; and *Tennison* of Idolatry.

†² In Deut. ii. 23. we read of the Avims, but then in the same text we are told, that the Caphtorim (which is generally understood of the Philistines) destroyed them, and lived in their stead, long before these times; nor does it appear that the king of Assyria ever had under his subjection the places where these people are said to have lived. The most probable opinion seems therefore to be that which the learned Grotius has suggested, by observing, that there are a people in Bactriana, mentioned by Ptolemy, under the name of Avadiæ, who might possibly be those whom Shalmaneser at this time transported into Palestine. *Wells's* Geography of the Old Testament, vol. iii.

†³ What these idols were, it is almost impossible to tell. Our learned Selden, though he thinks they were the same idol under different appellations, acknowledges himself unable to give any account of them; for he quite overlooks the fancy of the Rabbinical writers, who dress up the former in the shape of a dog, and the latter in that of an ass. *Patrick's* Commentary. *Jurieu*, in his *Histoire des Dogmes, &c.* part. iv. c. 10. has observed, That as the word *Nibhas*, or *Nibchas*, both in the Hebrew and Chaldee, with a small variation, denotes *quick, swift, rapid, &c.* and *Tartak* in the same languages signifies a *chariot*: these two idols may both together denominate the sun mounted on his car, as the fictions of the poets, and the notions of the heathen theologists, were wont to represent that bright luminary.

†⁴ Ptolemy makes mention of a city called Zipphara, on the banks of the river Euphrates, which the generality of interpreters take to be this: but as the

sacred history tells us, that the Israelites were translated into the cities of the Medes, and those Medes in all likelihood were brought to supply their places; the people between Colchis and Media, whom Herodotus calls the Saspire, may be the same with those that the text calls the Sepharvaites. *Calmet's* Commentary.

†⁵ The former of these, according to the Jewish doctors, was represented in the form of a mule; some say a peacock; and the latter in the form of an horse; some say a pheasant: but the definition of the words, as well as the sacrifices that were made to them, quite destroy these idol fancies. *Moloch, Milcom, and Melech*, in the languages of different nations, do all signify a *king*, and are put for the sun, which is called the king, as the moon is the queen of heaven: And therefore the addition of *adir* to the one, which denotes *powerful*, and of *ana* to the other, which signifies to *answer*, means no more than the mighty, or the oracular Moloch; as the children which were offered to him in sacrifice, shew that he was the same with the Moloch of the Ammonites, or the Saturn of the Phenicians. *Calmet's* and *Patrick's* Comment.

†⁶ This account we have here inserted in the Sacred History, not that we look upon the book of Tobit as canonical, (for that the Jews and ancient Christians never held it to be, though the church of Rome, by a decree of the council of Trent, thought fit to receive it as such), but purely because it has been allowed by the generality of Christian fathers, to be a true history of this particular family, a good exemplar of charity and beneficence, and an excellent pattern of paternal care and filial obedience. The book itself it supposed to have been wrote, the former part of it by Tobit, and the latter by his son; at least it is thought that they left behind them memoirs of their family, and such materials as a later author, who lived very likely either in or after the captivity, (because the words Raphael, Gabriel, and Michael, are allowed to be Babylonish), might compile and digest into proper order. It is not doubted but that the original of this book was either in Hebrew or Chaldee. St Jerome having met with a Chaldee copy of it, did not question but that he had got the original, and accordingly employed a man, that was perfectly well skilled in that language, to render it into Hebrew, whilst himself translated it into Latin; and this is the version that the church of Rome chiefly esteems. Before this version, there was another (which is reckoned the most ancient, done into Greek; but who the author of it was, or from what language he translated it, we have but small foundation for conjecture;

A. M. 3001,
&c. or 1654.
Ant. Chris
1003, &c. or
757.

ried one Anna, a woman of the same tribe (*a*), and by her had but one son, whose name was Tobias : That, during his captivity, he was advanced to be purveyor to king Shalmaneser, and in that capacity had liberty to go where he pleased, which gave him an opportunity of visiting his brethren, and doing them all good offices, of supplying their wants, and lending them money upon any occasion, as he did to one Gabriel, a kinsman of his, who lived at Rages in Media, to the sum of ten talents, for which he took his note : That, by a revolution of fortune, himself being reduced to a low condition, deprived of his eye sight, and now advanced in years, he ordered his son to go to Rages, to fetch the money he had left in his kinsman's hand ; and, because it was proper to have a companion in so long a journey, he hired a young man (as he thought) to be his guide, but who afterwards proved to be the angel Raphael : That, coming to their inn one night upon the banks of the Tigris, Tobias went into the river to wash his feet, when a large fish made at him as though it would devour him ; but the angel encouraged him to lay hold on it and draw it to the shore, and then bade him open it, and take out the heart, the gall, and the liver ; for that the heart and liver, when burnt, would drive away evil spirits, and the gall was an excellent remedy for all impediments in the sight : That, when they came to Echatana, they went to one Raguel, a near relation of Tobit's, who had an only daughter, named Sara, but her misfortune was to be haunted by a demon, who had slain her seven husbands successively the very first night they went to bed to her : That, notwithstanding this, by the persuasion of the angel, Tobias was induced to marry her, and by following his advice, how he and his wife were to conduct themselves after marriage, and in what manner they were to fumigate the room by burning the liver of the fish, came off safe, to the great joy of the whole family : That, having received the money at Rages, he returned with his wife to his parents at Nineveh ; and, upon his return, cured his father of his blindness, by rubbing his eyes with the fish's gall, which brought away a kind of white film that obstructed his sight ; That, after this recovery of his sight, Tobit lived about forty years ; but having all along charged his son (as soon as he and his wife were dead) to leave Nineveh, because the wickedness of the

though some have been apt to think, that it came from the same fountain from whence St Jerom had his, but that the translator had taken such freedoms with the text as obliged him to re-translate it. The Latin translation, which was in use before St Jerom's appeared, seems to have been taken from the Greek, though in many places it varies from it by abridging sometimes, and sometimes amplifying the narration. The Hebrew copies, published by Fagius and Munster, are nothing but translations (and those very modern ones) from the Greek or Latin versions, though in many places of the book they take the freedom to vary from them. That of Munster is supposed to have been done by himself, and that of Fagius by the Jews of Constantinople, in the year 1517, and has so near a conformity to the Greek, that no manner of doubt is to be made of its being descended from thence. These are the several versions that we have of this book of Tobit, which, as it was not received into the canon of the Jews, was not therefore admitted into that of the ancient Christian authors, who confined themselves to those books which the Jews acknowledged to be canonical. It is certain, that neither Josephus, nor Philo, nor any of the ancient Jewish writers, make any mention of that copy which St Jerom took so much pains about, nor do they register it among their sacred books. Fagius pretends, that this book of Tobit does not contain a true his-

tory, but a pious fiction only, wherein, under borrowed names, the characters of a father and a son, truly pious, are set forth ; and our learned Prideaux seems to go farther, when he tells us, " That there are some matters in it, which are not so reconcileable to a rational credibility, which look indeed more like the fictions of Homer than the writings of a sacred historian, and gives such an objection against the book as does not lie against any other." But notwithstanding these allegations, we may be assured, that the Jews had all along a great regard for this book. Origen, in his epistle to Africanus, tells us, that the ancient Christians read it, though they placed it among their Apocryphal writings. St Jerom acknowledges, that though they did not receive it into their canon, yet they admitted it among their hagiographa. Grotius owns, that they read this book, and looked upon it as a true history ; and our own Prideaux confesses, that " it is of great use to represent to us the duties of charity and patience, in the example of Tobit's ready helping his brethren in their distress, to the utmost of his power ; and his bearing, with a pious submission, the calamities of his captivity, poverty, and blindness, as long as they were inflicted on him. Calmet's Preface, sur le livre de Tobie, and Prideaux's Connection, Anno 612.

(*a*) Tobit i.

people, he was sure, would bring upon it the judgment which Jonah had denounced, Tobias (as soon as he had done his last duty to his parents) left the place, and with his wife and family returned to Ecbatana, where he found his father and mother-in-law healthy, though now grown old. Upon their death he succeeded to their estate; and after he had lived to the age of fourscore and nineteen, died in peace, and was buried by his children. But it is time now to look back upon the affairs of the kingdom of Judah.

From 1 Kings
viii. to the end
of 2 Chron.

Jotham, the son of Uzziah king of Judah, was five and twenty years old when he began to reign; though, as viceroy to his father, he had the whole administration in his hands for some years before. He (a) was a prince † famous for all excellent qualities and virtues; a man exemplary for his reverence to God, his justice to men, and his care for the commonwealth. He made it his business to set and keep things in order; to rectify whatever he found amiss; and, in matters of religion, would have made a thorough reformation, but that his people were extremely wicked, and obstructed his designs. He took care notwithstanding to repair the temple; to rebuild the high gate which led from his palace; and (to secure himself against hostile incursions) raised several structures, both in the mountains and forests, for the service and strength of the kingdom.

The Moabites, however, though they had been formerly conquered by David, and made tributary to the crown of Judah, were now become so powerful, that they invaded Jotham; but he, with a good body of men, soon drove them out of his country, and imposed on them a tribute of an hundred talents of silver, ten thousand measures of wheat, and as many of barley, to be paid him yearly. For three years they continued to pay it; but when Rezin king of Syria, and Pekah king of Israel, entered into a confederacy against Judah, they took this opportunity of revolting; and Jotham indeed had his hands too full ever to attempt to reduce them. He however died in peace before the preparations for war that were making against him took effect: and, being buried in the royal sepulchre of his ancestors, left his son Ahaz (who was then about twenty years of age, but much degenerated from his father's piety) under a fearful apprehension of the approaching war.●

The design of the two confederate kings, upon the taking of Jerusalem, was to have extirpated the whole house of David, and set up a new king over Judah, the son of Tabeal †²; but as God's design was only to punish Ahaz, and not to cut off the whole family of David his servant, he sent the prophet Isaiah to encourage him in the defence of the city; and (to assure him that they should not succeed in their attempt) he gave him two signs, the one to be accomplished speedily, and the other at some distance of time. The former was, (b) that the son which the prophet then had by his wife should not be of age to discern between good and evil, before both these kings should be cut off from the land. The other was, that a virgin (c) should conceive, and bear a son, who should be called EMANUEL, so that he might rest himself satisfied; be-

(a) *Josephus's Jewish Antiq.* lib. ix. c. 11.

† Solomon Jarchi here observes, that all the kings of Judah had some crime or other laid to their charge, except this Jotham: That David himself sinned grievously in the matter of Uriah; that Solomon by his wives was drawn into idolatry; that Rehoboam forsook the law of the Lord, and Abijah walked in his steps; that Asa sent the treasures of the temple to the king of Syria, and put the prophet in the stocks; that Jehoshaphat entered into society with the idolatrous; and so he goes on with all the rest: But in Jotham, says he, there is no fault found (which, in an age of general corruption, is pretty wonderful), un-

less we may suppose, that "the people's sacrificing and burning incense still on high places, 2 Kings xv. 35. (which he by his authority might have removed) be imputable to him as a fault. *Patrick's Comment.*

†² Who this person was, it is no where said in Scripture; but he seems to have been some potent and factious Jew, who having revolted from his master the king of Judah, excited and stirred up this war against him, out of an ambitious aim of plucking him down from the throne, and reigning in his stead. *Prideaux's Connection*, Anno 747.

(b) *Isaiah* viii. 4.

(c) *Ibid.* vii. 14.

A. M. 3001,
&c. or 4670.
Ant. Chris.
1003, &c.
or 741.

cause the destruction of the house of David could in no case happen until the Messiah should be born, in this miraculous manner, of a virgin descended from that family: And accordingly the two kings, finding themselves not able to carry the town so soon as they expected, raised the siege, and returned home.

This deliverance, however, made no other impression upon Ahaz, than that instead of being reformed, he grew more wicked and obdurate in his sins. For he not only set up the worship of the golden calves (for which he had not the same politic reason that the kings of Israel had), but made molten images likewise for all the inferior gods of the heathens. To these he sacrificed and burnt incense on the high places, and on the hills, and under every green tree. Nay (and to add to all his other impieties), made his sons "pass through the fire to Moloch *," in the valley of the sons of Hinnom †; for which provocations the Lord brought upon him the same confederate army the year following. This, dividing itself into three bodies, the first under Rezin, king of Syria, the second under Pekah, king of Israel, and the third under Zichri, a mighty man of Ephraim, invaded his kingdom in three different parts at the same time.

Rezin took Elah †², out of which he drove the Jews, and settled the Edomites in it; and having loaded his army with spoils, and taken a vast number of captives, returned to Damascus. Pekah, with his army, marched directly against Ahaz, and gave him a terrible overthrow, wherein he destroyed no less than an hundred and twenty thousand of his men: And Zichri, taking advantage of this victory, marched to Jerusalem; and having taken the royal city, slew Maaseiah, the king's son, and all the great men of the kingdom whom he found there. After this, both these armies of Israel, in their return, carried with them vast spoils, and above two hundred thousand captives, whom they intended to have sold for slaves: But as they approached Samaria, the prophet

* Interpreters are agreed, that "this passing through the fire" was performed, either by causing the child to pass between two fires made near one another, by way of its consecration to the service of Moloch, or by putting it in the body of the idol made of brass, and heated extremely hot, so that it was immediately burnt to death. But then, to abate the horror of the crime, some are of opinion, that Ahaz made his sons pass through the fire in the former sense only, and that because we find Hezekiah survive, and succeed him in the throne, and another of his sons, viz. Maaseiah, slain by Zichri, at his taking of Jerusalem; but this does not hinder Ahaz from having other sons, not mentioned in the history, whom he might make sacrifices to Moloch. The Scripture says expressly, that "he made his sons to pass through the fire, according to the abominations of the heathen, whom the Lord cast out before the children of Israel," 2 Kings xvi. 3. Now, it is incontestably true, that the ancient inhabitants of the land of Israel did frequently imitate the heathens in these barbarities: "They offered their sons and their daughters unto devils, and defiled the land with innocent blood, which they offered unto the idols of Canaan," Psal. cvi. 36. Vide Ezek. xvi. 20, 21. and xxiii. 37. 39. And therefore it is reasonable to think, that he did the same, and that this is recorded against him as an aggravation of his other crimes. *Patrick's and Calmet's Commentaries.*

† Hinnom, in all probability, was some eminent person in ancient times, to whom this valley belonged, and to whose posterity it descended, and is therefore

sometimes called the "valley of the children of Hinnom." It was a famous plot of ground on the east side of Jerusalem, and so delightfully shaded, that it invited the people to make it a place of idolatrous worship, whereby it became infamous, and was at last turned into a public dunghill, or receptacle, where all the filth and excrements of the city were brought and burnt; for which purpose, there was a perpetual fire kept, which made it a kind of image or representation of hell. *Patrick's Commentary, on Josh. xv. 8.*

†² Elah, or Elam (as we took notice before), was a famous port on the Red Sea, which David, in his conquest of the kingdom of Edom, took, and there established a great trade to divers parts of the world. In the reign of Jehoram, the son of Jehoshaphat, the Edomites recovered their liberty, and became sole masters of this city, until the time that Uzziah recovered it to the dominion of Judah, 2 Kings xiv. 22. but, in the reign of Ahaz, the Syrians retook it, and restored it to the Edomites: and why they chose to do this, rather than to keep so advantageous a place in their own possession, we may learn from what we read of the Edomites, 2 Chron. xxviii. 17. viz. that they invaded Judah, as auxiliaries to the king of Syria, much about the time that he was engaged in war with that kingdom; and therefore it is no wonder that he should give up a place which lay at too great a distance for him to keep, to the Edomites, whose originally it was, and who made perhaps the restitution of it one article of their confederacy with him. *Patrick's and Le Clerc's Commentaries.*

Oded, with the principal inhabitants of the city, came out to meet them, and, after pro-
per remonstrances of their cruelty to their brethren, prevailed with them, not only to
release the prisoners, but to let them likewise be clothed and relieved out of the spoils
they had taken, and so sent back to their own houses.

The kingdom of Judah was no sooner delivered from these enemies, but it was inva-
ded by others, who treated it with the same cruelty; for the Edomites to the south,
and the Philistines to the west, seized on those parts which lay contiguous to them,
and by ravages and inroads did all the mischief they could to the rest.

Being reduced to this low condition, and seeing no other remedy left to his affairs,
Ahaz sent an embassy to Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria, with a large present of all
the gold and silver that he could find in the treasury of the temple, and as large pro-
mises to become his vassal and tributary for ever, if he would but send forces to his as-
sistance against his enemies.

The king of Assyria readily laid hold on this invitation; and, marching with a great
army against Rezin king of Syria, he slew him in battle, besieged and took his capi-
tal of Damascus; and, having reduced the whole country under his dominion, trans-
planted the people to Kir, a place in the upper Media, and so put an end to the king-
dom of Syria in Damascus*, after it had continued for nine or ten generations.

After this, he marched against Pekah, seized all that belonged to Israel beyond Jor-
dan; and having plundered the land of Galilee, proceeded towards Jerusalem with an
intent to squeeze more money out of Ahaz, which when he had done, (by making him
cut the vessels of the temple to pieces, and melt them down to satisfy his avarice) he
marched back to Damascus, and there wintered, || without doing him any farther ser-
vice. These indignities, which another man might have resented, Ahaz, in his circum-
stances, thought proper to overlook; and not only so, but when he heard that Tiglath-
pileser was returned to Damascus, he went thither to pay him homage and obeisance
as his vassal and tributary. While he continued at Damascus, he happened to see an
idolatrous altar of so curious a make and figure in his opinion, that he ordered a model
of it to be taken, and sent to Urijah, the high priest at Jerusalem, † with injunction to

* In the time of Abraham, Damascus was in be-
ing; and some of the ancients inform us, that this pa-
triarch reigned there immediately after Damascus its
founder. Thus much is certain, that one, whom he
had made free, and appointed steward of his house,
was of Damascus, Gen. xv. 2. at the time that he pur-
sued Chedorlaomer, and the five confederated kings,
as far as Hoba, which lies northward of Damascus,
Gen. xiv. 15. The Scripture says nothing more of
this city until the time of David, when Hadad, who,
according to Josephus, (*Jewish Antiq.* lib. vii. c. 6.)
was the first who took upon him the title of king of
Damascus, sending troops to the assistance of Hadad-
ezer king of Zabab, was himself defeated by David,
and his country subdued. Towards the end of Solo-
mon's reign, Rezin recovered the kingdom of Damas-
cus, and shook off the Jewish yoke, 1 Kings xi. 23,
&c. Some time after this, Asa, king of Judah, im-
plored the help of Benhadad king of Damascus, a-
gainst Baasha king of Israel, 1 Kings xv. 18. And
from his time the kings of Damascus were generally
called Benhadad, till, in this last controversy with
them, Ahaz called in the assistance of the king of
Assyria, who killed their king, and carried his sub-
jects into captivity, according to the predictions of
Isaiah, chap. vii. 9. and Amos, chap. vii. *Calmet's*
Dictionary under the word.

|| In 2 Chron. xxviii. 20. we read, that Tiglath-pi-
leser came unto Ahaz, and distressed, but strength-
ened him not. And yet in 2 Kings xvi. 9. it is said,
that he did help him; and how then can he be said
to have distressed him? Very well; for, as he came
to his assistance against the king of Syria, so he took
Damascus, carried the people captive, and delivered
Ahaz from the power of the Syrians; but this did A-
haz little good, for he helped him not to recover the
cities which the Philistines had taken from him. He
lent him no forces, nor enabled him to recruit his
own; on the contrary, he rather weakened him, by
exhausting his treasures, and destroying Samaria,
which opened a way for the invasion of his country
with more facility, as it happened in the next reign.
For it is no uncommon thing, even in later ages, to
hear of kingdoms that have called in the help of some
foreign prince against their enemies, over-run and
conquered by those who came to their assistance.
Patrick's Commentary.

† It must not be denied indeed, but that the high
priest carried his complaisance much too far, in obey-
ing the king's injunction, which he ought, with all
his power and interest, to have opposed. God pre-
scribed to Moses in what form, and with what mate-
rials he was to make the altar, Exod. xxvii. 1, &c.
The altar which Solomon made, was indeed four times

A. M. 3246,
&c. or 4670.
A. C. Chris.
753, &c.
or 711

have another made as like it as possible; and when he returned, he removed the altar of the Lord out of its place in the temple, and ordered this new one to be set up in its stead, and that sacrifices, for the future, should be offered on it alone.

The truth is, the more his misfortunes came upon him, the greater his contempt of Almighty God grew; insomuch, that having defaced † several of the most stately vessels of the temple, he caused it at last to be wholly shut up; and, suppressing all Divine worship throughout the kingdom, in the room thereof he set up the worship of the gods of the Syrians †², and of other nations, alleging that they had helped their respective people; whereas his god, forsooth, had forsaken him, and therefore deserved no farther homage. But in the height of all his impiety and profaneness, he was cut off by a sudden stroke, in the very prime of his age, after he had lived six and thirty, and reigned sixteen years; and, being buried in the city of David, though not in the royal sepulchres, (for that honour he was denied because of his iniquities), he was succeeded by his son Hezekiah, who was a worthy and religious prince.

|| In the five and twentieth year of his age Hezekiah began to reign; and, af-

as large, 2 Chron. iv. 1. but then God had given such solemn testimony of his approbation of it, that there was no touching it without impiety: For the high priest could not but know, that this innovation of the king's did not proceed from any principle of religion, but from a design to degrade the altar of the Lord, as well as the other sacred vessels of the temple. But what shall we say for this? There will, in all ages, be some men found, who will be ready to execute the most impious commands that can possibly come from the throne. *Patrick's* and *Culmet's* Commentaries.

† The words in the text, according to our translation, are, "Ahaz cut off the borders of the bases, and removed the laver from off them, and took down the sea from off the brazen oxen that were under it, and put it upon a pavement of stones, and the covert for the Sabbath, that they had built in the house, and the king's entry without turned he from the house of the Lord, for the king of Assyria," 2 Kings xvi. 17, 18. His removing the bases, the laver, and the brazen sea, was palpably with a design to deface the service of God in the temple, and thence to bring it into public contempt; but then commentators are much at a loss, to know what we are to understand by the "covert for the Sabbath within, and the king's entry without the temple." Now the prophet Ezekiel tells us expressly, that the gate of the inner court which looked towards the east was opened only on the Sabbath, and on the day of the new moon, and that in these days the king was to enter into the temple at this gate, and continue at the entrance of the priests court (where was the brazen scaffold which Solomon erected, 2 Chron. vi. 13. a place for the king to pay his devotions on) until his sacrifices were offered; and if so, the word *musack*, which we translate *covert*, might be a kind of canopy, or other covered place, under which the king sat when he came to the service of the temple, on the Sabbath or other great solemnities, which was therefore called the covert of the Sabbath: And the reason why the king ordered this to be taken away, was, because he intended to trouble himself no more with coming to the temple, and by this action to express his hatred likewise,

and contempt of the Sabbath. *Patrick's* and *Culmet's* Commentaries, and *Spencer*, de Leg. Hebræor. lib. i. c. 1.

†² This was a monstrous stupidity, to think that these gods had any power over him, who could not defend themselves from the arms of Tiglath-pileser! Thinking, however, that they had distressed him, he sacrificed to them in order to appease their wrath, that they might do him no farther hurt; in the same manner as the ancient Romans were wont to bribe the gods of their enemies, with larger sacrifices than ordinary, in hopes of bringing them over to their party, and making them their friends. *Patrick's* Commentary.

|| Of Ahaz it is recorded, that he was but twenty years old when he began to reign, and that he reigned sixteen before he died, so that in the whole he lived six and thirty years, 2 Kings xvi. 2. Now his son Hezekiah is said to have been five and twenty years old when he began to reign, 2 Kings xviii. 2. and consequently his father must have begot him when he was eleven years old, which seems a little incredible: And to solve this difficulty commentators have taken several ways. Some have imagined that Hezekiah was not the real, but adopted son only of Ahaz, and might therefore succeed his foster-father at this or any other age: But this hypothesis (as Bochart observes) spoils the descent of our Saviour from David. Others suppose that there was an interregnum for some years, occasioned by a sedition that happened in Jerusalem: But there is no foundation for this hypothesis in history; on the contrary, it is much more likely, that as Hezekiah was a man grown, and greatly beloved by the people, he should immediately succeed upon his father's demise. Others again imagine, that in detestation of Ahaz's wickedness his reign is omitted on this account, and that therefore the passage should be thus rendered: "Ahaz was twenty years old when his father began to reign:" But this is reversing the order of words in the text, and turning them into a sense that is far from being natural. Others, not satisfied with any of these solutions, will needs have it, that there is an

ter he had got the full possession of the kingdom, (for during his father's illness he acted only as viceroy under him), he began, in good earnest, to † set about a thorough reformation of religion. To this purpose he caused the doors of the temple, which his father had ordered to be shut up, to be opened; his father's new altar to be removed; the altar of the Lord to be restored to its place again; and whatever other pollutions it had contracted during his father's administration, he ordered them all to be purged and done away. Then calling the priests and Levites together, he required them to sanctify themselves according to the directions of the law; and, after that, the former he appointed to offer sacrifices †², in order to atone for the king's, their own, and the people's sins; and the latter †³ with musi-

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error crept into the text itself by the negligence of some transcriber, who, instead of twenty, made Hezekiah five and twenty years old when his reign commenced, merely by mistaking the numerical letters: But it is not so well, even in numerical matters, (which are most liable to variation) to find any fault with the text, except where there is no other tolerable solution, which is not the case here. In those days, and long before, it was no unusual thing (upon several considerations) for kings to take the son who was to succeed them into partnership with them before they died. Now Ahaz, by his mismanagement, had brought himself into so many intanglements (2 Chron. xxviii. 16, &c. and xxix. 7, &c.) as to want an assistant in the government, and accordingly it appears that he admitted his son in that capacity. For, whereas it is said of Hezekiah, that he began to reign in the third year of Hoshea, son of Elah, 2 Kings xviii. 1. and of Hoshea, that he began to reign in the twelfth year of Ahaz, 2 Kings xvii. 1. it is evident that Hezekiah began to reign in the fourteenth year of Ahaz, his father, and so reigned two or three years before his father's death. So that at the first date of his reign (which was in conjunction with his father) he might be but two or three and twenty, and his father, consequently, when he begot him, two or three years older than the common computation. But there is another way of solving this difficulty. It is a common thing, both in sacred and profane authors, in the computation of time, to take no notice whether the year they mention be perfect or imperfect, whether finished or but newly begun. Upon this account Ahaz might be near one and twenty years old when he began to reign, and near seventeen years older when he died: And, on the other hand, Hezekiah, when he began to reign, might be but just entering into his five and twentieth year, and by this means Ahaz might be near fourteen years old when he begat Hezekiah, which is no extraordinary thing at all. Nay, even upon the lowest supposition, that he was but eleven or twelve years old, yet instances are innumerable (such as Bochart and others have given) of persons that have procreated children at that age: For it is not so much the number of years, as the nature of the climate, the constitution of the body, the stature of the person, the quality of the diet, &c. that ought to be considered in this affair. *Bochart's Phaleg.* p. 920. *Millar's History of the Church,* p. 201.

Bedford's Scripture Chronology. Patrick's and Calmet's Commentaries.

† A great demonstration this of his sincere piety and zeal towards God, that he began so soon to reform the corruption of religion, and did not stay till he had established himself in his throne! He might think, however, that the surest way to establish himself in the throne was to establish the true worship of God; though he could not but foresee that he run a great hazard in attempting the abolishing of idolatry which had been confirmed by some years prescription. *Patrick's Commentary.*

†² The words in the text are,—“For a sin-offering for the kingdom,” i. e. for the king's sins and those of his predecessors; “for the sanctuary,” for the priests sins and the profanations of the temple; “and for Judah.” i. e. for all the people who have followed the bad examples of their impious kings. Now the offering which the law prescribed for the transgressions of the people was a young bullock, and for the offences of the prince was a goat, Lev. iv. 23, &c. but good Hezekiah, we find, was willing to do more than the law commanded. He was sensible that both prince and people had been guilty, not only of sins of ignorance (for which these sacrifices were instituted), but of wilful and presumptuous crimes, of gross idolatry, a profanation of the temple, and an utter extinction of the worship of God; and therefore he appointed seven bullocks for a burnt-offering, and as many goats for a sin-offering, upon presumption that these numerous sacrifices were, if not necessary, at least highly fit and becoming, upon the account of the great and long neglect of Divine service, and the multitude and long continuance of their other offences against God, for which they were now to beg forgiveness. *Calmet's and Patrick's Commentaries.*

†³ Moses, in the service of the tabernacle, did not appoint the use of any musical instruments; only he caused some trumpets to be made, which, upon solemn occasions, were to be sounded at the time when the burnt-offering and peace-offering were upon the altar, Numb. x. 10. But David, by the advice of the prophets Gad and Nathan, introduced several kinds of music into the service of the temple, as a thing highly conducive to inspire people with respect, with joy, and with affection for the solemnities and assemblies of religion, 1 Chron. xxiii. 5. and xxv. 1.

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cal instruments, to sing praises to God, in the words of David † and of Asaph the seer.

Having thus restored the service of the temple, he proposed with himself to revive the passover, which, by reason of the division of the kingdom, and the frequent commotions that had happened thereupon, had not been regularly observed for a long while. To this purpose he advised with the princes and chief men of the kingdom; and, because it was thought that neither the temple, the priests, nor the people, could be sufficiently sanctified against the usual time of observing it, (which was in the first month of the year), it was resolved that †² it should be celebrated in the second: And accordingly a proclamation was issued out, requiring not only the people of Judah, †³ but all other Israelites, of whatever tribe they were, to come to this solemnity.

It could hardly be expected but that, after so long a disuse of this holy festival, an attempt to revive it should meet with some scorn and opposition; and therefore we need not wonder that many of the tribes of Ephraim, Manasseh, and Zebulun, should laugh at Hezekiah's messengers when they invited them to this feast. Great multitudes however, even from those parts, came to Jerusalem upon this occasion; and the concourse indeed was so numerous, that this might be justly reckoned one of the greatest passovers that had been solemnized from the days of king Solomon. The time which the law directs for the continuance of this feast is seven days; but, forasmuch as it had been long neglected, they now doubled the time, and kept it for fourteen, with great joy and gladness of heart: And as soon as the solemnity was ended, those that belonged to the tribes of Judah and Benjamin †⁴ went and brake the images in pieces, cut down the groves, threw down the high places and altars belonging to strange gods,

and it is farther observable, that the institution of music in religious assemblies is not a matter of human invention, but what was ordained by God, and has the sanction and authority of his prophets to confirm it; "for so was the commandment of the Lord by his prophets," 2 Chron. xxix. 25.

† David was both a great poet and master of music, and might therefore modulate and compose his own hymns; but whether the music of them might not be altered or improved in after ages, because the words only are here taken notice of, is a matter of some uncertainty. The Asaph here mentioned was the person who lived in David's days, so famous for his skill in music, and the several devout pieces which he composed, are those which we meet with in the collection of the Psalms; but others will needs have it, (but for what reason I cannot tell) that the author of the Psalms ascribed to Asaph was another person who lived in after times, though perhaps of the same family, as well as name, with this famous Asaph who lived in David's. *Patrick's Comment.*

†² The direction which the law gives, is,—That the passover should be "celebrated on the fourteenth day of the first month, which the Jews call Nisan; but, because it was found impossible to get all things in readiness against that time, it was judged more advisable to adjourn it to the fourteenth of the next month, (which the Jews call *Jyar*) rather than stay to the next year: and for this they had some encouragement; because the law allows, that, "in case any man shall be unclean, by reason of a dead body, or be on a journey afar off," he may eat "the passover on the fourteenth day of the second month," Numb. ix. 10, 11, and what was an indulgence to

particular persons, they thought might well be allowed to the whole congregation of Israel. *Patrick's Commentary.*

†³ Hezekiah, it is certain, had no right to invite Hoshea's subjects to repair to Jerusalem to the celebration of his passover; yet, for the doing of this, we may well presume, that he had encouragement from Hoshea himself, who, as to the matter of religion, (as we said before) has a better character in Scripture than any of his predecessors from the division of the two kingdoms. But the truth of the matter was, that both the golden calves (which had made this political separation) were now taken away, that of Dan by Tiglath-pileser, and the other of Bethel by his son Shalmaneser; and therefore the apostate Jews, being thus deprived of their idols, began to return to the Lord, and to go up to Jerusalem to worship for some time before Hezekiah made them this invitation to his passover. *Prideaux's Connection, Anno 729.*

†⁴ This, as the text tells us, was done not only in the tribes of "Judah and Benjamin, but in those of Ephraim also and Manasseh," 2 Chron. xxxi. 1. which, though they were part of Hoshea's dominion, yet Hezekiah might direct this abolition of idolatry in them, in virtue of a law which bound Israel as well as Judah, and required the extirpation of these things in the whole land of Canaan; by the special impulse and direction of God's spirit, which puts men upon heroic actions, though not to be drawn into imitation; or out of a firm persuasion that his neighbour Hoshea, who had permitted his subjects to repair to the passover, would approve and consent to what he did in this respect. *Pool's Annotations.*

and absolutely destroyed all the monuments of idolatry which were anywhere to be found, either in Jerusalem, Judea, or any of the coasts belonging to them; as those of the other tribes, in their return home, did the same in all the rest of Israel; so that idolatry was quite abolished, and the true worship of God again universally restored.

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of 2 Chron.

Nay, there was one thing, viz. the brazen serpent †, which might have been of innocent use, and served in the same manner as did the pot of manna and Aaron's rod, for a monument of God's miraculous mercy to the Israelites in their passage through the wilderness; but, because the preceding times of iniquity had made it an object of idolatrous worship, Hezekiah thought proper to destroy it, in order to take away all occasion of the like abuse for the future. Having thus removed all the objects of idolatry, he took care, in the next place, to restore the temple worship to its ancient splendour and purity. To this purpose he put the priests and Levites in their courses, and appointed every one his proper ministration. The tithes and first-fruits which idolatrous princes had detained, on purpose to bring the priesthood into poverty, and thence into contempt, he returned to the church; and, †² out of his own privy purse, (as we say) ordered the expence of the daily oblations, as well as of the larger offerings on the great festivals of the year, to be defrayed.

Upon these and several other accounts, Hezekiah deserved the title of one of the best of kings || that ever reigned in Judah; nor was God in the least wanting to re-

† The reason which the Scripture assigns for Hezekiah's destroying this brazen serpent is,—“because, unto this day, the children of Israel had burnt incense to it,” 2 Kings xviii. 4. We are not, however, to suppose, that, all along from the days of Moses, this brazen serpent was made an object of religious worship: this is what neither David, nor Solomon, in the beginning of his reign, would have allowed of; nor can we think, but that either Asa, or Jehoshaphat, when they rooted out idolatry, would have made an end of this, had they perceived that the people, at that time, either paid worship, or burnt incense to it. The commencement of this superstition therefore must be of a later date, and since the time that Ahab's family, by being allied to the crown of Judah by marriage, introduced all kinds of idolatry. Now one false inducement to the worship of this image might be a mistake of the words of Moses; for, whereas it is said, “that whosoever looketh upon it shall live,” Numb. xxi. 8. some might thence fancy, that, by its mediation, they might obtain a blessing, and so make it the object of their superstition at first. However, we may imagine that their burning incense, or any other perfumes before it, was designed only in honour to the true God, by whose direction Moses made it; but then, in process of their superstition, they either worshipped the God of Israel under that image, or (what is worse) substituted an heathen god in his room, and worshipped the brazen serpent as his image; which they might more easily be induced to do, because the practice of some neighbouring nations was to worship their gods under the form of a serpent. Upon this account Hezekiah wisely chose rather to lose this memorial of God's wonderful mercy to his people in the wilderness, than to suffer it any longer to be abused to idolatry, and therefore “he brake it in pieces,” i. e. as the talmudists explain it, he ground it to powder, and then scattered it in the air, that there might not be the least remains of it. And yet,

notwithstanding all the care which he took to destroy it, Sigonius, in his history of Italy, tells us, that, in the church of St Ambrose, in Milan, they shew a brazen serpent entire, which they pretend to be the very same which Moses erected in the wilderness; though it must be owned that, among their learned men, there are some who acknowledge the cheat and disclaim it. *Le Clerc's Commentary*, and *Prideaux's Connection*, Anno 726.

†² After that David had brought the ark of the Lord into the tent which he had pitched for it, near his own palace, the Scripture seems to intimate, 1 Chron. xvi. 1. that he divided the priests and Levites into two bodies; one of which he left at Gibeah, to attend in the tabernacle which Moses made; and the other he took with him to Jerusalem. And, from this time, it is highly probable, that out of his own estate he supplied whatever was necessary for the sacred ministry of this his domestic tabernacle on Mount Sion. When Solomon had built the temple, he obliged himself to defray all the expences, both ordinary and extraordinary, of the altar, 2 Chron. viii. 13. And, in like manner, upon the rebuilding of the temple, at the return from the captivity, Ezekiel assigns a proper revenue to the king, to answer the expence of all sacrifices, both stated and occasional, ch. xlvi. so that Hezekiah in this did properly no more than what was incumbent on him; though several of his idolatrous predecessors had doubtless withdrawn the fund appropriated to that purpose, which made it so commendable in him to restore it to its proper channel. *Calmet's* and *Patrick's Commentaries*.

|| The words in the text are,—“So that after him was none like him amongst all the kings of Judah, nor any that were before him.” 2 Kings xviii. 5. Now it is plain that the same commendation is given of Josiah, viz. that “like unto him was there no king before him, which turned to the Lord with all his heart, &c. neither after him arose there any like him,”

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ward his piety in a most signal manner. For, while Shalmaneser was engaged in the siege of Samaria, he warred against the Philistines, and not only regained all the cities of Judah, which they had seized during the time that Pekah and Rezin jointly distressed the land, but also dispossessed them of almost all their own territories, except Gaza and Gath.

As soon as the siege of Samaria was over, Shalmaneser sent to Hezekiah to demand the tribute which his father Ahaz had agreed to pay to the kings of Assyria, but Hezekiah refused to pay it; which would doubtless have brought the Assyrian upon him with all his power. had he not been diverted by the war * he entered into against Tyre, and died before he had put an end to it.

He was succeeded by his son Sennacherib, who, as soon as he was settled on the throne, renewed the demand for the tribute; and upon Hezekiah's refusing to comply, marched a great army into Judea in order to fall upon him.

‡ Not long before this, Hezekiah was taken with a sore illness, and had a message from God, by the prophet Isaiah, to settle his affairs, and prepare for death; but, upon his great concern, and hearty prayer to God, he obtained another message from him by the same prophet, promising him a reprieve for fifteen years longer, and a deliverance from the Assyrians, who were then coming against him. Both these were events beyond his expectation; and therefore, to give him a full assurance of faith, God at his request made the sun go backward ten degrees upon the sun-dial that Ahaz had erected; and when (by the prophet's directions) a plaster of figs was applied to his ulcer, he recovered in the space of three days, and went up to the temple to return God thanks for so wonderful a deliverance.

Upon Hezekiah's recovery, Merodach-Baladan, king of Babylon, sent ambassadors † to congratulate him, and, at the same time, to enter into an alliance with him against Sennacherib, whose growing power the Babylonians, as well as the Jews, had reason to fear: and Hezekiah was so taken with the honour done him upon this occasion, that,

2 Kings xxiii. 25. So that this character of Hezekiah must relate to some particular virtue wherein he stood distinguished from the rest of the kings of Judah, and that was, "his trusting in the Lord God of Israel," (as it is in the beginning of the verse) and not in the help of any foreign forces, as all the other kings, (even the most renowned for their piety) in some measure, are known to have done. *Calmet's Commentary.*

* The king of Tyre finding the Philistines brought low by the war which Hezekiah had lately made upon them, laid hold on the opportunity to reduce Gath (which had some time before revolted from him) under his obedience. Hereupon the people of Gath, applying themselves to Shalmaneser, engaged him in their cause against the Tyrians. He soon took several of their cities, and at length closely besieged their capital: but, before he could carry the place, (which held out for five years) he died, and by that means gave some respite to Hezekiah. *Prideaux's Connection, Anno 720.*

‡ In the course of the Sacred History, this sickness of Hezekiah's is placed immediately after the defeat and death of Sennacherib; whereas it plainly happened before that time, because in the message which God sent him upon his bed of sickness by the prophet Isaiah, he promises to "deliver Jerusalem out of the hands of the king of Assyria," 2 Kings xx. 6.

The truth of the matter is,—Hezekiah reigned in all nine and twenty years, 2 Kings xviii. 2. He had already reigned fourteen years when Sennacherib invaded him, 2 Kings xviii. 13. and after his sickness he continued to reign fifteen years, 2 Kings xx. 6. so that his sickness must have happened in the very same year that the king of Assyria invaded his kingdom; but the sacred penman deferred the account he was to give of that until he had finished the history of Sennacherib, which he was willing to give the reader at one view; and this is the true reason of the mislocation. *Calmet's Commentary.*

† The conquests which the Assyrians were every where making, could not fail of giving umbrage to the neighbouring powers to confederate against them; and therefore we may well suppose, that, besides the business of congratulating Hezekiah's recovery, the purpose of this embassy was to enter into an alliance with him against Sennacherib, whose growing power the Babylonians had reason to fear as well as the Jews; and (as the author of the Chronicles expresses it) "to enquire into the wonder that was done in the land," 2 Chron. xxxii. 31. i. e. to enquire about the miracle of the sun's retrogradation, which could not fail of being a matter of great curiosity to the Chaldeans, who, above all other nations, were at that time given to the study of astronomy. *Calmet's Commentary, and Prideaux's Connection, Anno 713.*

out of the vanity and pride of his heart, he shewed the ambassadors all the wealth † and strength of his kingdom; for which the prophet Isaiah was sent to reprove him, and to let him know, that a day would come when all the stores he made such ostentation of should be carried into Babylon; which admonition || he received in a very decent and humble manner.

Sennacherib, in the mean time, advanced with a mighty army against the fenced cities of Judah, and, having taken several of them, he came at length and sat down before Lachish, and threatened, after he had taken that, to besiege even Jerusalem itself. Hereupon Hezekiah, taking advice of his princes and chief counsellors, made all manner of preparations for a vigorous defence. He repaired the walls, and fortified them with towers. He provided darts and shields in great abundance, and all other arms and artillery that might be useful, either to defend the place or annoy the enemy. He had the people enrolled that were fit for war, and placed over them good officers, both to instruct them in all military exercise, and to head and conduct them when they were to make their sallies. He stopped up the fountains * for a good compass round, and the brook †² that passed by the walls of the city, in order to distress the enemy for want

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† The things which Hezekiah shewed to the Babylonian ambassadors, were the riches of his house, his treasures, his armoury, and all his stores and strength for war; and the reason for his doing this was doubtless to make the Babylonians put the greater value upon his friendship. But herein he offended God, that he not only laid a bait before these foreigners to encourage them to invade his country, but seemed to place more confidence in this new alliance with them, than in the power of the Almighty, whose favour and protection he had so long experienced. The author of the Chronicles tells us, that, "in the business of the ambassadors of the princes of Babylon, who sent unto him to enquire of the wonder that was done in the land, God left him to try him, that he might know all that was in his heart," 2 Chron. xxxii. 31. And from hence some have inferred, that Hezekiah's great offence lay, not so much in the ostentation of his military stores and treasures, as in his not giving sufficient glory to God for so signal a miracle, and his recovery ensuant thereupon, and in his not representing this matter to these idolatrous ambassadors in such powerful and convincing terms as might have drawn them over to the knowledge of the true God, which was the proper improvement he should have made of this Divine vouchsafement to him. *Le Clerc's Commentary.*

|| The words in the text are,—"Then said Hezekiah unto Isaiah, good is the word of the Lord which thou hast spoken. And he said, Is it not good, if peace and truth be in my days?" 2 Kings xx. 19. The prophet had told him, that the very people whom he had been so highly complimenting, would carry his posterity into captivity; and to return him such an answer as this, shews not all the concern which a good prince ought to have for his people and posterity. It shews, indeed, as if he cared not what became of them, so long as he was permitted to live easy and happy. The words in the original are to this effect, "That which thou hast told me from God is good." I willingly submit to it: "But shall peace and truth (i. e. solid and lasting peace), continue for my time?

May I flatter myself with so much happiness? and will God be so gracious as not to revoke the grant which he hath made me of a longer continuance here? He is just, no doubt, in every thing he sends upon us; but do these threats relate to me or my posterity only? Well were it for me if he would suspend the execution of his wrath for the little time that I have to live." This is the natural sense of Hezekiah's answer; and accordingly, Josephus makes him say, "that though I am much afflicted at the thoughts of the misery that will befall my family; yet since it is God's pleasure that it should be so, I have no more to beg of heaven, than that I may enjoy the small remainder of my miserable life in peace." *Jewish Antiq.* lib. x. c. 3. and *Calmet's Commentary.*

* It is an old stratagem in war, to distress an enemy by the want of water; but this is what the besiegers do generally practise against the besieged. In this manner it was, Holofernes intended to distress Bethulia, Judith vii.; and of Semiramis, Cyrus, and Alexander, it is reported, that they all took Babylon by diverting the current of the Euphrates. But Hezekiah here takes another method. He is for preventing the Assyrians from carrying on the siege of Jerusalem by intercepting the water, i. e. by filling up the fountain-heads with earth, that the enemy might not perceive where any water was; and so carrying their streams through pipes and subterraneous channels into the city, there to be received in basons and large pools, for the benefit of the besieged: And this he might do with more facility to himself, and prejudice to the enemy, because (except the springs and brooks that were just contiguous to the city) the whole country (according to Strabo, lib. xvi.), for the space of sixty furlongs round about, was all barren and waterless. *Le Clerc's Commentary.*

†² This must be the brook Kidron, which ran in a valley of that name, between the city and the Mount of Olives, when it had any water in it; for, except in the case of great rains, or the snow's dissolving from the mountains, it was generally dry. However, if it had any fountain-head, by stopping up that, and di-

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of water; and to strengthen himself the more against them, he entered into an alliance, offensive and defensive, with the king of Egypt. But this alliance the prophet Isaiah highly blamed, as it implied a diffidence of the Almighty's power to help him, and would redound to his own shame, and reproach, and confusion at last, which accordingly came to pass. For while Sennacherib was besieging Lachish, Hezekiah, observing that this new ally of his made no haste to come to his assistance, and being sadly sensible that of himself he was not sufficient to resist so powerful an adversary as the king of Assyria, sent ambassadors to him, desiring him to retire out of his dominions, and promising to submit to such conditions as he should be pleased to impose upon him.

The demand which Sennacherib made was the payment of three hundred talents † of silver, and thirty talents of gold; which Hezekiah was not able to raise, without exhausting all his treasures, and stripping the very doors of the temple of the gold plates wherewith they were overlaid. This diverted the king of Assyria for some time, so that, leaving Judea, he turned his arms against Egypt*; but after a series of different successes, he returned again, and invested Lachish, and thence (contrary to all faith, and the agreement subsisting between him and the kings of Judah) sent three of his principal officers, with a good detachment of forces, to demand the surrender of Jerusalem.

†² Rabshakeh (for that was the name of the person who delivered the demand from the king of Assyria) spake in the Hebrew tongue, and in a very insolent and imperious manner, to the three ministers of state whom Hezekiah sent to parley with him, telling them, "That it was in vain for them to trust in their God for help, because his master's arms had been all along so victorious, that the gods of other nations could not resist

verting its current by conveyances under ground, Hezekiah might, in like manner, make it of no use to the besiegers. *Patrick's* and *Calmet's* Commentaries.

† The Hebrew talent, according to Scripture, (*Exod. xxv. 39.*) contains three hundred shekels, and every shekel answering to the value of three shillings, "these three hundred talents of silver" must contain, of our money, one hundred and thirty five thousand pounds; and "the thirty talents of gold," two hundred and sixty thousand; so that the whole sum, here paid by Hezekiah, amounted to three hundred fifty one thousand pounds of our money. *Prideaux's* Connection, Anno 713.

* What might possibly be the occasion of a war between two kingdoms so widely distant as Assyria and Egypt were, it is difficult to know. We have no where any information from history, and are left therefore to conjecture,—That, after Shalmanezar had taken away the ten tribes, and sent colonies in their room, the tribe of Simeon, which lay nearest to Egypt, becoming part of his dominions, as well as the rest, the Egyptians might take the advantage of the Assyrians great distance, and make some encroachments upon it. That Sennacherib, when he was come as far as Judea, might take that opportunity to proceed with his arms into Egypt, in order to be revenged of Sevechus, the son of Sabacon, or So (whom Herodotus calls Sethon), who was at this time king of Egypt, and the chief pontiff likewise of the god Vulcan. And as he was a weak prince, the king of Assyria gained many advantages over him; but sitting down at length before Pelusium, when he had brought his platforms (as Josephus tells us) within a little of the top of the walls, and was upon the very

point of giving the assault, news was brought him, that Terhakah, king of Ethiopia, was upon his march, with a great enforcement, to assist the Egyptians; whereupon he immediately raised the siege, and drew off his army; which gave occasion to the fabulous account in Herodotus, viz. "That upon the king's prayer to his god Vulcan, there came, in one night, such troops of rats into the camp of the Assyrians, that they gnawed all their bow-strings to pieces, and so, in effect, disarmed the whole camp of the besiegers, and made them draw off from the town with so much precipitation." *Le Clerc's* Commentary on 2 Kings xxiii. 29. and *Jewish Antiq.* lib. x. c. 1.

†² Tartan, Rabsaris, and Rabshakeh, are not the proper names of these men, but rather denote their employments and offices. *Tartan* signifies the *president of the customs*, *Rabsaris*, the chief *eunuch*, and *Rabshakeh*, the principal *cup-bearer*; and because he spake Hebrew with some fluency, the Rabbins are generally of opinion, that he was either an apostate Jew, or one of the captivity of Israel. It is certain that he was a very eloquent man, and his speech very excellently well calculated to raise sedition or defection among the besieged; but that a person of his education should be versed in the Phœnician, which is in a manner the same with the Hebrew language, is no wonder at all. Moreover, had he been a Jew (though an apostate), he should have known better, one would think, than to have upbraided Hezekiah with acting according to the law under which he lived, in destroying the groves and altars of idols, and in requiring his subjects to worship God in Jerusalem only, 2 Kings. xviii. 22. *Le Clerc's* Commentary.

their course ; and much more vain would it be to depend on the king of Egypt for assistance, who was hardly able to support his own dominions, and would certainly * fail them when they looked for his aid. Their wisest way therefore would be, to surrender the town to his master, the great king of Assyria, at discretion ; for if they pretended to stand a siege (and this he spake with a louder voice than ordinary, in the audience of the people that were upon the wall, and in hopes of creating a revolt among them), his master would distress them to such a degree, that they should be compelled to eat their own ‘excrements, and drink their own piss.’

From 1 Kings
viii to the end
of 2 Chron.

When Hezekiah heard the blasphemous message which Rabshakeh had delivered to his ministers, he rent his clothes, put on sackcloth, went to the temple to address himself to God, and sent an account thereof to his prophet Isaiah. But Isaiah’s answer was, not to fear the menaces of the proud Assyrian ; for that God would soon find out a method to make him depart his country ; which accordingly came to pass. For news being brought him, that Tirhakah, king of Ethiopia (or of the Cuthites rather in Arabia), had invaded some part of his dominions, he immediately raised the siege of Libnah † (where he then was), and marched against the enemy : However, before he raised the siege, he sent a second summons to Hezekiah, as insolent and blasphemous as the former. This was delivered in a letter ; and Hezekiah had no sooner read it, but he went into the temple, spread it before the Lord, and implored of him a deliverance from this outrageous enemy ; which Isaiah assured him he should have, because that the Lord had taken the city of Jerusalem under his protection, and would not therefore suffer the king of Assyria *2 (notwithstanding all his vain boastings) to come near it.

In the mean time, the king of Assyria having engaged the Ethiopian army, and given them a great overthrow, was in full march to Jerusalem, flushed with this fresh victory, and resolved to destroy the place and every soul in it ; when the very night after that the prophet had given the king of Judah this assurance, an angel †2 of the

* The words in the text are,—“ Now behold thou trustest upon the staff of this bruised reed, even upon Egypt,” 2 Kings xviii. 21. The comparison is excellent, to denote an ally that is not only weak and unable to help, but dangerous likewise to those that rely upon him for succour ; and his representing the power of Egypt to be as brittle as the canes or reeds that grow on the banks of the Nile (for it is to this, no doubt, that the Assyrian orator alludes), is a great beauty in the similitude. This, however, must be allowed, that what he here speaks in contempt of the Egyptian strength, has more of ostentation in it than truth ; because the Assyrian army, having lately made an attempt to subdue that kingdom, was now returned into Judea with disgrace. *Patrick’s, Le Clerc’s, and Calmet’s Commentaries.*

† Libnah was not far from Lachish, both situated on the mountains of Judea ; and it is probable that Sennacherib, not finding himself able to carry the latter, had removed the siege to Libnah, which was a place not so well fortified in his opinion, and yet so situated, that by keeping a good guard in the chops of the mountains, he might carry on the siege, without any fear of Tirhakah’s coming upon him. *Le Clerc’s, Commentary.*

*2 The prophet, in his answer to Hezekiah, has given us an admirable description of the ridiculous vanity and ostentation of a king puffed up with great success. “ By thy messengers thou hast reproached

the Lord, and hast said,—With the multitude of my chariots I am come up to the height of the mountains, and the sides of Lebanon ;—and I will enter into the lodgings of his borders, and enter into the forest of his Carmel. I have digged, and drank strange waters, and with the soles of my feet have I dried up all the rivers of besieged places,” 2 Kings xix. 23, &c. as if he had said, “ What can resist the force of my victorious arms ? Or where is the place that is inaccessible to the strength and activity of these troops ? I have scaled the top of the highest mountains with my heavy chariots of war. I have ascended even Lebanon itself, and through the most difficult passages have opened and plained myself a way.—Who then shall hinder me from taking up my quarters in what part of Judea I please, from either climbing up to the top of Carmel, or from coming down into the fruitful vales, by making an entire conquest of the country ? At my call, fountains, even in the driest places, arise ; at my beck, the hills subside, the rocks divide, and make me a way ; and at my approach, the deepest rivers and ditches run dry ; so that resistance is unavailable, and victory must attend my standard wherever I go, or whatever enterprise I take in hand.”

——Subsidere nostris

Sub pedibus montes, arescere vidimus amnes.

Claud. de Bello Gallico.

†2 The ancient Jews (as well as Persians and Arabians) were of opinion, that there is an angel of death,

A. M. 3246,
&c. or 4686.
Ant. Chris.
758, &c.
or 725.

Lord came down into the camp of the Assyrians, and smote no less than a hundred fourscore and five thousand men: So that, terrified with this slaughter, Sennacherib made haste into his own country, and took up his residence at Nineveh; where he had not been long before * his two eldest sons, Adrammelech and Sharezer, conspired against him, and as he was worshipping at the temple of Nisroch *² his god, fell upon him, and slew him; and afterwards making their escape into Armenia, gave room for Esarhaddon, their younger brother, to succeed in the throne.

After this signal defeat of the Assyrian army, Hezekiah lived the remainder of his days in peace and tranquillity, being both honoured and revered by all neighbouring nations, who by this, and several more instances, perceived that he was under the immediate protection of God, and were therefore afraid to give him any molestation. So that, being at rest from wars, he applied his thoughts to the good government of his people, and the improvement of the city of Jerusalem, by erecting magazines, and filling them with arms, and by making a new aqueduct, which was of great convenience to the inhabitants for the supplying them with water. At length, after a course of great and worthy actions, he died in the twenty-ninth year of his reign, and was buried with great solemnity † in the most honourable place of the sepulchres of the sons of David. Happy in every thing else, except in being succeeded by a son, whose name was Manasseh, and who, in the beginning of his reign more especially, proved the very worst of all his race.

or an exterminating angel, to whom God has given the commission to take away the lives, either of single persons, or of multitudes of people at once, wherein the Almighty gives the order, but leaves the method of doing it to the discretion of the angel; so that in which way soever the infliction is made, it is always said to be done by the angel of God. The modern Jews are much of the same opinion: For they maintain, that this angel of death stands at every dying man's bed's head, with a naked sword in his hand, at the extremity of which there hang three drops of gall, and that the sick person, seeing this angel, in a great fright opens his mouth, whereupon he immediately drops into it these three fatal drops; the first of which occasions his death; the second makes him pale and livid; and the third reduces him to the dust in the grave, with some other notions of the like nature. Now since the Scripture has no where said expressly, in what manner this Assyrian army was destroyed, some have thought that it was by a plague; others by thunder and lightning; others by fire from heaven; others by a scorching wind; and others, by their falling foul of one another in the obscurity of the night. [Dr Hales adopts the hypothesis, which attributes this destruction to that scorching wind so well described by Bruce under the title of the *Simoom*]; but which way soever it was effected, according to the Hebrew idiom, there is no impropriety in saying, that it was done by a destroying angel, which is a comprehensive phrase, that reconciles all the Scripture passages wherein this terrible defeat is mentioned, and all the sentiments of commentators concerning it. *Calmet's Dissert. sur la D faite de l'Arm e de Sennacherib*, and *Hales's Analysis*, vol. ii.

* When Sennacherib was got home, after the loss of so great an army, he demanded of some about him, What the reason might be, that the irresistible God

of heaven so favoured the Jewish nation? To which he was answered, That Abraham, from whom they were descended, by sacrificing his only son to him, had purchased his protection to his progeny; whereupon the king replied, "If that will win him, I will spare him two of mine to gain him to my side;" which when his two sons, Sharezer and Adrammelech, heard, they resolved to prevent their own death by sacrificing him. But for all this fiction there is no other foundation, but that scarce any thing else can be thought of that can afford any excuse for so wicked a parricide. *Prideaux's Connection*, anno 709.

*² Some take this god to be the figure of Noah's ark; others of a dove, which was worshipped among the Assyrians; and others of an eagle. The Hebrew of Tobit, published by Munster, calls it Dagon; but Selden acknowledges, that in all his reading he never met with any thing that could help him to explain it. Jurieu, however, seems to be more lucky in his enquiries; for by several arguments, he has made it appear that this idol was Jupiter Belus, the founder of the Babylonish empire, who was worshipped under the form of an eagle; and therefore, he observes farther, that as this Belus in profane history was the same with the Nimrod of Moses, between Nimrod and Nisroch the dissimilitude is not great, nor is it improbable, that to perpetuate his honour, his votaries might change the name of Nimrod, which signifies a rebel, into that of Nisroch, which denotes a young eagle. *Patrick's Commentary*, and *Jurieu Histoire des Dogmes*, &c. part iv. c. 11.

† In the innermost and chiefest of the rooms of the royal sepulchres of the house of David, was the body of Hezekiah placed in a nich, which in the upper end of the room was very likely at that time cut on purpose for it, to do him the greater honour. *Prideaux's Connection*, anno 699.

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Manasseh was but a minor of twelve years old when he succeeded to the crown; and as he had the misfortune to fall into the hands of such guardians and chief ministers as were ill-affected to his father's reformation, they took all the care imaginable to breed him up in the strongest aversion to it, and to corrupt his mind with the worst of principles, both as to religion and government. For he not only worshipped idols, restored high places, and erected altars unto Baal, but in the room of the ark of the covenant set up an idol, even in the sanctuary itself, made his children pass through the fire to Moloch, practised witchcrafts and enchantments, and consulted soothsayers, and such persons as dealt with familiar spirits.

From 1 Kings
viii. to the end
of 2 Chron.

Nor was he content to practise these abominations himself, but being naturally of a cruel temper, he raised bitter persecutions against those who would not conform. The prophets * who were sent to reprove him, he treated with the utmost contempt and outrage, and filled, in short, all the land with innocent blood, which he shed in carrying on his detestable purposes; but it was not long before the Divine vengeance overtook him.

Esarhaddon being settled in the kingdom of Babylon, began to set his thoughts on the recovery of what his father Sennacherib had lost in Syria and Palestine; and having raised a great army, marched into the territories of the ten tribes, from whence he carried away a great multitude of Israelites, who were remains of the former captivity, and so, sending some of his generals with a part of his army to Judea to reduce that country likewise, they vanquished Manasseh in battle, and, having taken him hid in a thicket of briars and brambles, brought him prisoner to Esarhaddon †, who put him in irons, and carried him prisoner to Babylon.

†² His prison and chains brought him to himself, and made him so sensible of his heinous provocations against God, that, with deep sorrow and humiliation, †³ he implored the Divine pity and forgiveness, and thereupon prevailed with God to mollify the

* The prophets who are supposed to have been living in this king's reign, were Hoshea, Joel, Nahum, Habakkuk, some say Obadiah; and who was the greatest prophet of them all, Isaiah. In the late reign he was in great esteem at court, and being himself of the blood royal, and (as some say) the king's father-in-law, he thought it more incumbent upon him to endeavour to reclaim him from his degenerate wicked courses: But this so exasperated him against Isaiah, that instead of hearkening to his remonstrances, he caused him to be apprehended, and to make his torture both more lingering, and more exquisite, had him sawn asunder with a wooden saw, to which the author of the epistle to the Hebrews, chap. xi. 37. may be thought to allude. *Calmet's Commentary*, and *Howell's History in the Notes*.

† From Isaiah xx. 1. we may learn, that Esarhaddon (whom the sacred writer in that place calls Sargon) king of Assyria, sent Tartan, his general, into Palestine; and it was he (very probably) who took Manasseh, and carried him prisoner to Babylon. Esarhaddon was, some time before, no more than king of Assyria; but upon his accession to the throne, he made himself master of Babylon and Chaldea, and so united the two empires together. [Dr Hales however seems to have proved that it was not till the thirtieth year of his reign as king of Assyria, that he recovered Babylon, which had revolted from his father.] *Calmet's Commentary*, *Prideaux's Connection*, Anno 677, and *Hales's Analysis*, &c. vol. iii.

†³ The Jewish doctors have a tradition, that, while Manasseh was at Babylon, by the direction of his conqueror, he was put in a large brazen vessel full of holes, and set near to a great fire; that in this extremity, he had recourse to all his false deities, to whom he had offered so many sacrifices, but received no relief from them; that, remembering what he had heard his good father Hezekiah say, viz. "When thou art in tribulation, if thou turn to the Lord thy God, he will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee," Deut. iv. 30, 31. he was thereupon immediately delivered, and, in a moment, translated to his kingdom. But this is no less a fiction than that miraculous flame which the author of the imperfect comment upon St Matthew speaks of, that encompassed him on a sudden, as he was praying to God, and having melted his chains asunder, set him at liberty. *Vid.* Tradit. Hebr. in Paralip. et Targum in 2 Chron. xxiii. 11. In all probability it was Saos Duchin, the successor of Esarhaddon, who, some years after his captivity, released Manasseh out of prison.

†³ We have a prayer which, it is pretended, he made in prison. The church does not receive it as canonical, but it has a place among the Apocryphal pieces, and, in our collections, stands before the books of the Maccabees. The Greek church however has received it into their Euchologium, or Book of Prayers, and they use it sometimes as a kind of devout form, and what contains nothing in it deserving censure. *Calmet's Dictionary* under the word *Manasseh*.

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king of Babylon's heart, who restored him to his liberty, and re-instated him in his kingdom.

Upon his return to Jerusalem, he redressed, as much as he could, the mischiefs which his former impiety had done. He abolished the idolatrous profanations of the temple, restored in all things the reformation which his father had made, and obliged all his subjects to worship and serve the Lord only ; so that, after this, God blessed him with a long and prosperous reign, longer indeed than any of the kings of Judah, either before or after him had reigned. He possessed the throne full five and fifty years ; and yet, (notwithstanding his signal repentance) because his former wickedness was so great, he was not allowed the honour of being buried in any of the royal sepulchres, but was laid in a grave made in the garden belonging to his own house, called the garden of Uzzah †, and was succeeded by his son Amon.

This prince, imitating the first part of his father's reign, and not the repentance of his latter, gave himself up to all manner of wickedness and impiety ; so that God shortened his government, by permitting some of his own domestics (†² after a reign of two years) to conspire against him, and slay him : But as wicked as he was, the people of the land took care to revenge his murder, by putting all to death who had any hand in it, though they would not, at his burial, honour him (any more than his father) with a place among the sepulchres of the sons of David.

His son Josiah, who was then a child no more than eight years old, succeeded in the throne ; but, having the happiness to fall under the conduct of better guardians in his minority than did Manasseh his grandfather, he proved, when grown up, a prince of very extraordinary worth, equal, if not superior, in piety, virtue, and goodness, to the best of his predecessors. In the sixteenth year of his age, he took upon him the administration of the kingdom, and, beginning with the reformation of religion, endeavoured to purge it from all those corruptions which had been introduced in the preceding reigns. To this purpose, he took a progress through the whole kingdom, and wherever he came, brake down the altars, cut down the groves, and brake in pieces all the carved and molten images that were dedicated to idolatry. The graves of idolatrous priests he dug up, and burnt their bones upon some of those altars, thereby to defile, and pollute them for ever ; and †³ whatever priests of the Levitical order had at any time sacrificed on the high-places, though it were to the true God, these he took care to depose from their sacerdotal office. †⁴ The houses of the Sodomites he broke down : Tophet †⁵,

† This garden, as some think, was made in that very spot of ground where Uzzah was struck dead for touching the ark of the Lord, 2 Sam. vi. 7. but others imagine, that this was the place where Uzziah, who died a leper, was buried, 2 Chron. xxvi. 23. and that Manasseh chose to be buried here, as unworthy, because of his manifold sins, (whereof he nevertheless repented) to be laid in any of the royal sepulchres of the kings of Judah. *Patrick's* and *Calmet's* Commentaries.

†² This (as some Jewish authors observe) is the usual number of years to which the sons of those kings did arrive, who, by their abominations, provoked God to anger ; as they instance in the son of Jeroboam, 1 Kings xv. 25. the son of Baasha, chap. xvi. 8. the son of Ahab, chap. xxii. 51. *Patrick's* Commentary.

†³ Several of these priests, seeing the worship of the temple abandoned, and, after that, the tithes, and offerings, and sacrifices were taken away, having nothing to subsist themselves, had the weakness to repair to the high places, and there offer unto God such oblations and sacrifices as the people brought them ;

(for it does not appear that any of them entered into the service of false gods) but because this was giving countenance (by their presence and ministry) to a worship that was forbidden, Deut. xii. 11. he would not receive them any more into the service of the temple, though he suffered them to be maintained by it. He puts them, in short, into the conditions of those priests that had any blemish, who might not offer the bread of their God, and yet might eat the bread of their God, both of the holy and most holy, Lev. xxi. 21, 22. *Calmet's* and *Patrick's* Commentaries.

†⁴ This was the name which is sometimes given to the most infamous of all prostitutes, who exposed their bodies to be abused contrary to nature, in honour of those filthy deities whom they worshipped. Their houses were near the temple, and therefore these were persons consecrated to impurity ; and that they might commit their abominations with a greater licentiousness, they had women appointed to make them tents, wherein they were wont to retire upon these detestable occasions. *Calmet's* Commentary.

†⁵ It is the general opinion of the Jews, that the

which was in the Valley of Hinnom, he defiled : The horses * dedicated to the sun he removed : Burnt its chariots with fire ; and, being not satisfied with destroying all the monuments of idolatry in his own dominions, he visited in person the cities of Ephraim and Manasseh, and all the rest of the land which had formerly been possessed by the ten tribes, and there did the same. But, while he was at Bethel, † discovering by the inscription the monument of the prophet, who was sent from Judah to declare against the altar which Jeroboam had there set up, and (above three hundred years before) to name the very name of Josiah who was to destroy it ; he would not suffer it to be touched, nor his bones to be molested.

From 1 Kings viii. to the end of 2 Chron.

Having thus carried on the work of reformation in the distant parts of his kingdom, he took care, in the next place, to have the temple repaired. To this purpose, he ordered Hilkiah the high priest to take a general view of it, and see what was necessary to be done ; who, while he was surveying and examining every place, chanced to find a “ book of the law of the Lord given by Moses.” The book was carried to the king ; who having †² heard some part of it read, rent his robes in dread of the curses denounced against a wicked people, and immediately sent the high priest and some other of his chief officers to Huldah †³ the prophetess to enquire of the Lord ; who returned

word *tophet* comes from *toph*, which, in their language, signifies a *drum* ; because drums, in this place, were used to be beat, in order to deaden the cries of those children which were burnt alive by the idol Moloch : But there is one objection to this etymology, viz. that it does not appear that the larger kind of drums, such as are in use now, were at all known to the ancients. There was a lesser sort indeed, or what we call a tabor, wherewith they made music in their dancing ; but these were not loud enough for the present purpose, and the larger kind we owe to the Arabians, who first brought them into Spain, from whence they were dispersed all Europe over. *Le Clerc's* Commentary.

* It is certain that all the people of the East worshipped the Sun, and consecrated horses to it, because they were nimble and swift in their course, even as they supposed it to be.

Placat equo Persis radiis hyperiona cinctum,
Ne detur celeri victima tarda Deo.

Ovid. Fast. lib. i.

But then the question is, whether the people of Judah sacrificed these horses to the sun, (as it is certain the Armenians, Persians, and other nations did) or only led them out in state every morning, to meet and salute the sun at his rising ? The ancients had a notion likewise, that the sun itself was carried about in a chariot ; and therefore chariots, as well as horses, were dedicated to it. Since then we find these horses and chariots standing so near together, the horses, we may suppose, were designed to draw the chariots, and the chariots to carry the king, and his other great officers, (who were idolaters of this kind) out at the east gate of the city every morning, to salute and adore the sun at its coming above the horizon. *Bochart's* Hieroz. part. i. lib. xi. c. 10.

† The Jews will tell us, that on one side of the grave (where the prophet of Judah and the prophet of Bethel lay together) there grew nettles and thistles ; on the other, myrtles and other odoriferous plants, signifying that a true and false prophet lay there ; and that this raised the king's curiosity to enquire, whose that se-

pulchre was ; but there is no ground for this fabulous fancy. The king, we may suppose, espied a stone or a pillar, more eminent than the rest, with the names of the persons that were buried under it, and this made him ask the question of the men of the city, i. e. some of the old inhabitants that had escaped the captivity, and not any of those new-comers whom the king of Assyria had sent thither ; for these could give no account of the ancient histories of the Israelites ; neither can we suppose, that the sepulchre itself, after so many years standing, could have been distinguishable, had not some pious person or other, with an intent to perpetuate the memory of the thing, in each successive age, taken care to preserve and repair it, Matth. xxiii. 29. *Le Clerc's* and *Patrick's* Commentaries.

†² Whether it was the whole Pentateuch, or the book of Deuteronomy only, which the high priest found in the temple, it is generally agreed, that the part which Shaphan read to the king was taken out of the book of Deuteronomy, and, not without some probability, that the xxviiith, xxixth, and xxxth chapters were that portion of Scripture which the secretary, who (as we are told, 2 Kings xxii. 8.) had read the book before he brought it to the king, thought proper upon this occasion to turn to ; for therein is contained a renewal of the covenant which Moses, as mediator, had made between God and the people of Israel at Mount Horeb ; and therein are those threats and terrible comminations to the transgressors of the law, whether prince or people, which affected Josiah so much, and which Moses had given the Levites to put on the side of the covenant, that it might be there for a witness against the transgressors of it, Deut. xxxi. 25, 26. *Calmet's* Commentary.

†³ This is the only mention we have of this prophetess, and certainly it makes much to her renown, that she was consulted upon this weighty occasion, when both Jeremiah and Zephaniah were at that time prophets in Judah. But Zephaniah perhaps at that time might not have commenced a prophet ; because

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them in answer, "That the judgments threatened in the book of the law would not be long before they fell upon the kingdom of Judah; but that, because the king had expressed so deep a concern upon hearing the denunciation of them, their execution should be delayed till after his death."

The good king, however, in order to appease the wrath of God, called together a solemn assembly of all the elders and people of Judah and Jerusalem; and going with them to the temple, he caused the law of God there to be distinctly read; and when that was done, both he and all the people entered into a covenant to observe all that was contained in it. After this, he made another progress round the kingdom of Judah and Samaria, to destroy every the least remainder of idolatry that he could meet with; and when the season of the next passover was come, || had it kept with such exactness and solemnity, as had never been observed from the days of Samuel the prophet to that time.

In a word, this excellent prince did all that in him lay to atone for the sins of the people, and appease the wrath of God; but his decree † for the removal of Judah into a land of their captivity was passed, irrevocably passed: and therefore, when Pharaoh Necho * king of Egypt desired to pass through Judea, in order to go and attack Char-

though we are told that he "prophesied in the days of Josiah," Zeph. i. 1. yet we are no where informed, in what part of his reign he entered upon the prophetic office. Jeremiah too, might at that time be absent from Jerusalem, at his house at Anathoth, or some more remote part of the kingdom; so that, considering Josiah's haste and impatience, there might be no other remedy at hand to apply to but this woman. "Great is the wrath of the Lord that is kindled against us," says the king to his ministers, 2 Kings xxii. 13. and therefore his intent in sending them might be to enquire whether there were any hopes of appeasing his wrath, and in what manner it was to be done. Being therefore well assured of this woman's fidelity in delivering the mind and counsel of God, the ministers who went to enquire, concluded rightly, that it was much more considerable what message God sent, than by whose hand it was that he conveyed it. *Pool's Annotations.*

|| The words of the text are,—“Surely there was not held such a passover from the days of the Judges, nor in all the days of the kings of Israel, and of the kings of Judah,” 2 Kings xxiii. 22. which, taken in a literal sense, must denote, that this passover, which was celebrated by two tribes only, was more numerous, and more magnificent, than all those that were observed in the days of David and Solomon, in the most happy and flourishing state of the Jewish monarchy, and when the whole twelve tribes were met together to solemnize that feast. It may not be amiss therefore to allow, that in these expressions there is a kind of auxesis or exaggeration not unusual in sacred, as well as in profane authors. For no thing is more common than to say, “never was so much splendor and magnificence seen,” when we mean no more, than that the thing we speak of was very splendid and magnificent: unless we suppose with some, that a preference is given to this passover above all the rest, in respect of the exact observation of the rites and ceremonies belonging to it, which at other times were performed according to custom, and several things either altered or omitted; whereas at

this, every thing was performed “according to the prescribed form of the law,” from which, since the finding of this authentic copy of it, Josiah enjoined them not to vary one tittle. [It was on this last account undoubtedly combined with the sincere piety of the king and people, and not on account of the numbers assembled or the magnificence of the ceremonies, that this passover, held by Josiah and his subjects, was preferred even to these which had been held by David and Solomon.] *Calmet's and Le Clerc's Commentaries.*

† Though Josiah was doubtless sincere in what he did, and omitted nothing to restore the purity of God's worship, wherever his power extended; yet the people had still a hankering after the corruption of the former part of Manasseh's reign. They complied indeed with the present reformation; but this was only out of fear of incurring the king's displeasure, or of feeling the severity of his justice. Their hearts were not right towards God, as appears from the writings of the prophets that lived in those times; and therefore, seeing no sign of their repentance, God had no reason to reverse his decree. *Calmet's and Le Clerc's Commentaries.*

* *Pharaoh* signifies no more in the Egyptian language than *king*, and was therefore given to any one that sat upon that throne: But *Necho* (according to Herodotus) was his proper name, though some will have it to be an appellative, which signifies *lame*, because this Pharaoh (as they suppose) had a lameness which proceeded from some wound he had received in the wars. The same historian tells us, that he was the son and successor of Psameticus king of Egypt, and a man of a bold enterprising spirit; that he made an attempt to join the Nile and the Red Sea, by drawing a canal from one to the other; that though he failed in his design, yet, by sending a fleet from the Red Sea through the streights of Babel-Mandel, he discovered the coasts of Africa, and, in this his expedition to the Euphrates, resolved to bid fair (by destroying the united force of the Babylonians and Medes) for the whole monarchy of Asia. *Prideaux's*

chemish †, a city belonging to the king of Babylon, and situate upon the Euphrates, Josiah would by no means consent to it; but getting together his forces, posted himself in the valley of Megiddo *, on purpose to obstruct his passage. The Egyptian king hearing of this, sent ambassadors desiring him to desist, declaring that he came not to invade his territories, but purely to do himself justice on the king of Babylon; and assuring him withal, that what he did in this case was by the order and appointment of God. Josiah however thought himself no way concerned to believe him; and therefore, on Necho's marching up to the place where he was posted to receive him, a battle immediately ensued, wherein the Egyptian archers discovering Josiah, (though he had disguised himself before the action began) plied that quarter of the army where he fought so very warmly with their arrows, that at last receiving a mortal wound from one of them, he was carried in another chariot *² out of the battle to Jerusalem, where, after a reign of one and thirty years, he died, and was buried in the sepulchre of his ancestors.

*³ The death of so excellent a prince was deservedly lamented by all his people, but by none more sincerely than by Jeremiah the prophet; who, having a thorough sense of the greatness of the loss, as well as full foresight of the sore calamities which were afterwards to follow upon the whole kingdom of Judah, while his heart was full with a view of both these, wrote a song of lamentation *⁴ upon this mournful occasion; but

Connection, Ann. 610. and *Marshall's Canon*. *Æg.* Sæcul. 18.

† Geographers make no mention of this city under this name; but it is very probably the same with what the Greeks and Latins call Cercusium, or Cercesium, which was situated on the angle formed by the conjunction of the Chaboras or Chebar and the Euphrates. Isaiah, x. 9. speaks of this place, as if Tilgath-pileser had made a conquest of it, and Necho perhaps now was going to retake it, as we find he did; but Jeremiah informs us, Chap. xlv. 1, 2. that in the fourth year of Jehoiachin king of Judah, it was taken and quite destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon. *Calmet's Commentary*, and *Wells's Geography of the Old Testament*, vol. iii.

* Megiddo was a city in the half tribe of Manasseh, not far from the Mediterranean Sea, which way Necho was to pass with his army in order to go into Syria, and thence to the Euphrates. In the valley adjoining to this place Josiah was slain, while he was at the head of his army, (as Josephus tells us) and riding up and down to give orders from one wing to the other. This action Herodotus makes mention of, when he tells us, that Necho's king of Egypt having fallen upon the Syrians near the city Magdol, obtained a great victory, and made himself master of Cadytis, where the author plainly mistakes the Syrians for the Jews; Magdolum, a city in the lower Egypt, for Megiddo; and Cadytis, for Kadesh, in the upper Galilee, by which he was to pass in his way to Charchemish, or rather for the city of Jerusalem, which in Herodotus's time might be called by the neighbouring nations Cadyta, or Cadyscha, i. e. the holy city; since, even to this day, it is called by the Eastern people Al-huds, which is plainly both of the same signification and original. *Calmet's Dictionary*, under the word *Kadesh*, and *Prideaux's Connection*, An. 610.

*² It was the custom of war in former times, for great officers to have their led horses, that if one failed they might mount another. The kings of Persia

(as Quintus Curtius informs us) had horses attending their chariots, which, in case of any accident, they might make to; and in like manner we may presume, that when it became a mighty fashion to fight in chariots, all great captains had an empty one following them, into which they might betake themselves if any mischance befel the other. *Bochart's Hieroz.* part. 1. c. 2. and 9.

*³ The author of the book of Ecclesiasticus has given us his encomium in these words:—"All except David, and Hezekias, and Josias, were defective. They forsook the law of the Most High; even the kings of Judah failed. But the remembrance of Josias is like the composition of the perfume, that is made by the art of the apothecary; It is as sweet as honey in all mouths, and as music at a banquet of wine. He behaved himself uprightly in the conversion of the people, and took away the abomination of iniquity. He directed his heart unto the Lord, and in the time of the ungodly he established the worship of God." *Ecclus.* xlix. 1, &c.

*⁴ The Jews were used to make lamentations, or mournful songs, upon the death of great men, princes, and heroes, who had distinguished themselves in arms, or by any civil arts had merited well of their country. By an expression in 2 Chron. xxxv. 25, "Behold they are written in the Lamentations," one may infer, that they had certain collections of this kind of composition. The author of the book of Samuel has preserved those which David made upon the death of Saul and Jonathan, of Abner and Abisalom: but this mournful poem which the disconsolate prophet made upon the immature death of good Josiah, we no where have; which is a loss the more to be deplored, because, in all probability, it was a masterpiece in its kind; since never was there an author more deeply affected with his subject, or more capable of carrying it through all the tender sentiments of sorrow and compassion. *Calmet's Commentary*, and *Preface sur les Lamentations de Jeremie*.

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A. M. 3246, that is lost ; and the other (which goes under his name, and is still remaining) was composed upon the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar.
 &c. or 4772.
 Ant Chris.
 758 &c.
 or 639.

THE OBJECTION.

“ **BUT** how religious soever we may suppose Josiah the king of Judah to have been, we cannot but wonder at his ignorance in the law of God. Those who had the care of his education, were required to instruct him in it (*a*) upon all proper occasions ; himself (according to what (*b*) the law directs) was to transcribe a copy of it with his own hand, and to have it so constantly in his remembrance, as if it were (*c*) ‘ frontlets between his eyes ;’ and yet, when he was no less than six and twenty years old, and in the eighteenth year of his reign, we find him (*d*) rending his clothes for fear of the threats denounced against a wicked prince and people, as if he had never read his bible (which the high priest by the bye seems equally a stranger to), nor heard a word of the book of Deuteronomy before.

How the chosen people of God came so frequently to fall into the detestable sin of idolatry we are not at a loss to comprehend ; but though, whenever they did so, it was the part of every good prince to endeavour to reclaim them ; yet we should be glad to know what right king Josiah had to extend his reformation into other countries, and to exercise this authority in the kingdom of Samaria, which was then subject to the Assyrians ; or upon what pretensions he opposed Necho, king of Egypt, when he only civilly asked a passage through his country, and was going to do himself justice upon an enemy that had invaded his territories first.

Had he sent indeed in his own name only, Josiah might have pleaded in his excuse, the danger of admitting a large army into the bowels of his country ; but since (*e*) the request was sent in the name of God, who had put him upon this expedition, and accordingly prospered him in it, we cannot but say that Josiah justly suffered for opposing the Almighty’s will, and intermeddling in the matter wherein he had no concern : Though how to absolve the Divine goodness and veracity, in bringing so good a prince to an untimely end, and causing him to be slain in battle, when he had promised (*f*) ‘ that he should be gathered into his grave in peace,’ is what we cannot unriddle.

‘ The sting of death is sin ;’ but the man who can appeal to God for the truth and sincerity of his heart (as we find Hezekiah appealing), may bid defiance to that prince of terrors : And yet (whatever his distemper might be) the Scripture represents this great and good man, upon notice of his death, in a very piteous plight, (*g*) ‘ weeping sore, (*h*) chattering as a crane or a swallow, and mourning like a dove,’ at the thoughts of his dissolution, which is far from setting the saint and the hero, much more the benefits which accrue from a religious life, in an advantageous light.

A person so passionately in love with life may well be supposed to desire some assurance of his recovery : But to cause the sun, not only to stop its course, but even to go ten degrees backward for his conviction, is a little too lavish.

Instead of disturbing the whole course of nature, therefore, merely to satisfy the diffidence of one man, it is more rational to think (*i*) that this miracle was not wrought

(*a*) Deut. vi. 7.
 (*e*) 2 Chron. xxxv. 21.
 xxviii. 3, 14.

(*b*) Chap. xvii. 18.
 (*f*) 2 Kings xxii. 20.
 (*i*) *Le Clerc’s* Comment. on 2 Kings xx. 9.

(*c*) Chap. vi. 8.
 (*g*) Ibid. xx. 3.
 (*h*) Isaiah

upon the body of the sun, but upon the dial only, i. e. that God, upon this occasion, made no alteration in the motion of the heavens, but only, by the means of some extraordinary meteors or refractions, so disposed the rays of the sun, and directed its light, that no shadow could be projected but where the prophet foretold.

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But whether this miracle was in the motion of the sun, or in the direction of its shadow only, it certainly was a sufficient evidence to convince Hezekiah of his future recovery. Much better than what God gave this prince, to assure him (*a*) that the king of Assyria should not invest the city of Jerusalem, 'nor shoot an arrow there, nor cast a bank against it.' Much better (*b*) than what he gave king Ahaz, when, from the invasion of two confederate kings, he lay under the most dreadful apprehensions. For (*c*) of what use can a sign be that is subsequent to the thing signified? What consolation could the promise of the future birth of a son be to a person labouring under perplexity and want of immediate relief? Or where is the sense of the prophet's saying, that (*d*) 'before the child (to be born seven hundred years hence) shall be able to distinguish between good and evil, the land shall be forsaken of both her kings?'

But of all the stories in this period of time, commend me to that wonderful novel of young Tobias and the angel in their adventures to Ecbatana. His father's losing his eye-sight by the hot dung of swallows had been a sad family accident, had not the gall of the fish come in opportunely to remedy it; though it be the first time that we ever knew that a swallow's dung was pernicious, and a fish's gall restorative to the eye-sight. This however was nothing, in comparison to its heart and liver, whose very smoke was enough to drive away the devil Asmodeus as far as the utmost parts of Egypt, where the good angel took care to chain him down, that he might give the new-married couple no farther molestation. All this sounds so like a romance, that we know not what else to call it, unless we will suppose with Grotius (*e*), that the whole account is parabolical, and that this pretended Asmodeus was some ill quality attending Sara's body, which had proved mortal to her other husbands, but that Tobias, by using proper fumigations, had preserved himself and cured her."

THAT the dung of swallows is of a very hot and caustic quality, and when dropt into the eye, must needs be injurious to the sight, as being apt to cause an inflammation, and thereby a concretion of humours, which in process of time may produce a white film that will obstruct the light from the optic nerves; and that the gall of a fish (especially of the fish called *Callionymus*) is of excellent use to remove all such specks and obstructions to the sight, we have the testimony of some of the greatest men, (*f*) physicians and naturalists, to produce in confirmation of this part of Tobit's history. That good angels are appointed by God to be the guardians of particular men, and, in execution of this their office, do frequently assume human shapes, to guide them in their journeys, and to deliver them from all dangers, is a doctrine (*g*) as ancient as the patriarch Jacob's time, embraced by Christians, and believed by the wisest heathens; and that every man, in like manner, has an evil angel or genius, whereof some preside over one vice and some over another, insomuch that there are demons of avarice, demons of pride, and demons of impurity, &c. each endeavouring to ensnare the person he attends with a complexional temptation, is another position that has been almost generally re-

ANSWER.

(*a*) Isaiah xxxvii. 33.

(*b*) Ibid. vii. 14.

(*c*) *Grounds and Reasons of the Christian Religion.*

(*d*) Isaiah vii. 16.

(*e*) Tobit iii. 8. and vi. 4.

(*f*) Galen,

de Simplic. Medicament. Facult. lib. x. c. 12. *Ælian*, lib. xiii. c. 4. *Rhasis*, lib. ix. c. 27. *Pliny*, lib. xxvii. c. 11. *Gesner*, Hist. Animal. lib. iii. *Aldrovand.* Ornitholog. lib. 17. *Vales*, de sacra Philosoph. c. 42.

(*g*) Gen. xlviii. 16. Psal. xxxiv. 7. Matth. xviii. 10. Acts xii. 15. *Hesiod*, Oper. et Dies, lib. i. *Plato*, de Legibus, lib. x. et *Apuleius*, de Deo Socratis.

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ceived, (a) not only in the Jewish and Christian, but in the Pagan theology likewise ; and therefore thus far the history of Tobit can be no novel or romance.

That good angels have a superior power and controul over the bad, and, by the Divine authority, can curb and restrain their malice, (which is all that we need understand by their binding them up), is evident from a passage in the Revelations very similar to what we read here concerning Raphael and Asmodeus : (b) " I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit, and a great chain in his hand, and he laid hold on the dragon, the old serpent, which is the devil and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more : " And that this good angel, personating an Israelite, and (c) calling himself Azarias, the son of Ananias, was not guilty of any lie or prevarication, is plain from cases of the like nature. For, as the picture is usually called by the person it represents, and he who in tragedy acts the part of Cato, does for that time go under his name, so Raphael, being sent by God in the form and appearance of a young man, was in that capacity to act and speak as if he had been such. Nor was there any fallacy in his assuming the name of Azarias, which signifies God's help or assistance, since he was manifestly sent for this very purpose, that he might be a guide and assistance to Tobias in his journey, and therefore very prudently concealed his quality of an angel, that he might more conveniently execute his commission. So that hitherto there is no incongruity in the whole narration, if we can but have a farther account why (d) the smoke of the fish's liver and heart should be of an efficacy to put the evil spirit to flight.

Those who are of opinion (e) that demons or evil angels were invested with certain material forms, wherein they snuffed up the perfumes, and feasted themselves upon the odours of the incense and sacrifices that were offered to them, have an easy way of solving this difficulty, by supposing that the smell of the burnt heart and liver of the fish was offensive to Asmodeus, even as they pretend, (f) that in some herbs, plants, stones, and other natural things, there is a certain virtue to drive away demons, and to hinder them from coming into such a determinate place. The Chaldeans, among whom the book of Tobit was wrote, and the Israelites, for whose use and instruction it was wrote, might both be of this opinion :—That demons, as not absolutely divested of all matter, were capable of the same sensations and impressions that belonged to corporeal substances ; and therefore, in accommodation to the vulgar idea and prejudice of the people, the author of this history might express himself as though the expulsion of this evil spirit was effected by a natural cause, the smoke of the fish, even though at the same time he sufficiently intimates, that it was by a Divine power that it came to pass, because we find the angel thus enjoining Tobias, (g) " When thou shalt come to thy wife Sara, rise up both of you, and pray to God, who is merciful, who will pity you, and save you."

Upon the contrary supposition, viz. that this demon was a being incorporeal, (and this is the supposition concerning the angelical nature which generally prevails) we may safely conclude, that the smoke of the fish's entrails could have no direct and physical effect upon him ; that his fleeing away therefore was occasioned by a supernatural power, in the exercise of which, the angel, appointed to attend Tobias, was the principal instrument ; (h) that he ordered the burning of the fish's entrails as a sign when the evil spirit, by his superior power, should be chased away ; or, in the same sense that our blessed Saviour spread clay upon the eyes of the man that was born blind, and

(a) Vid. Buxtorf, Synag. Jud. c. 10 Basnag. Hist. des Juif. lib. vi. c. 19. Orphei Hymn. ad. Musas. Plutarch, in Bruto. 1 Pet. v. 8. Matth. vii. 32, 33. Luke xiii. 11, 16. (b) Rev. xx. 1, &c.
(c) Tobit v. 12. (d) Ibid. viii. 2. (e) Porphyr. de Abstin. lib. ii. (f) Origen. cont. Cels. lib. viii.
(g) Tobit. vi. 17. (h) Saurin's Dissert. sur le Demon Asmodée.

ordered him to wash in the pool of Siloah, viz. not as the cause, but the proof of his cure; and that he sent him away (a) "into the uttermost parts of Egypt," i. e. into the deserts of the Upper Egypt, because our Saviour intimates, that such is the usual habitation of evil spirits, when he represents them (b) "as walking through dry places, seeking rest, and finding none."

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However this be, we cannot hold ourselves concerned for the vindication of every expression in a book, which our church has not thought fit to receive into her canon of Scripture. It is sufficient for our present purpose, that the historical ground-plot of it be true, whatever may be said as to some particular passage in it; and though its figurative and poetical style, as well as near conformity to the theology then in vogue, may give some umbrage to a reader, that will not be so candid as to think with St Jerom, (c) "*Multa in Scripturis sanctis dicuntur juxta opinionem illius temporis, et non juxta quod Rei veritas continebat* *".

Whether the book of the law, which Hilkiah the high priest found in the house of

(a) Tobit viii. 3.

(b) Matth. xii. 43.

(c) Jerom in Jerem. c. xxviii.

* [By much the greater part of this disquisition on the book of Tobit might have been well omitted. That book was never admitted into the canon of the Hebrew Scriptures by the Jews; nor is it to be found in the earliest and most authentic canons of the Christian church. That there was such a man as Tobit, carried captive with the rest of the tribe of Naphtali by Shalmaneser; that he was eminent for his piety and charity; that his wife, though a good woman, was not always obedient to her husband; that he became blind in the manner which is recorded, and had his sight restored by the means which are said to have been used for that purpose; and that his son married the daughter of Raguel of Ecbatana, after she had been betrothed to seven husbands, there is no reason to doubt; for not one of these events is contrary to the common course of nature. It is indeed very singular that seven young men should have successively perished on their attempting each to consummate his marriage; but such events were not, in themselves, impossible, and perhaps we may even conceive the cause by which they were effected. The whole story of Asmodeus and Raphael is certainly a piece of poetical machinery, invented for a similar purpose with that for which Homer introduces his gods and goddesses as taking opposite sides in the Trojan war, or for which the Persian poets introduce the agency of good and evil genii, in their beautiful moral allegories. It was to adapt the story to the taste of those for whose amusement and instruction it was written, who delighted in the marvellous, and on whose memory and imagination, a philosophical account of a singular event would have made no deep or lasting impression. To understand the story of Raphael and Asmodeus *literally*, as Calmet seems to have done, would be to prefer the authority of this beautiful oriental tale to that of the whole Hebrew Scriptures, in which I heartily agree with Bishop Horsley, that no countenance whatever is given to the popular doctrine of guardian angels.

"This interpretation, says the bishop (a), introdu-

ces a system, which is in truth nothing better than the pagan polytheism, somewhat disguised and qualified; for in the pagan system every nation had its tutelary deity, all subordinate to Jupiter, the sire of gods and men. Some of those prodigies of ignorance and folly, the rabbins of the Jews, who lived since the dispersion of the nation, thought all would be well if for tutelary deities they substituted tutelary angels. From this substitution the system (of guardian angels) which I have described, arose; and from the Jews the Christians adopted it with other fooleries."

But though the story of Raphael and Asmodeus must be considered as mere machinery, it does not by any means follow that the history itself—the detail of *facts*, is not entitled to great credit. No man of real learning, Mr Bryant alone excepted, has ever called in question, I believe, the great outlines of the Trojan war as drawn by Homer; though surely no man in this age hath believed, that the pestilence was sent among the Grecian troops by Apollo, for Agamemnon's cruelty to his injured priest, or that Diomed literally wounded the god of war, and sent him bellying with pain to heaven! That there were such men however as Agamemnon and Diomed; that the former was the commander of the confederate Greeks, and the latter one of their most accomplished heroes; and that in the tenth year of the war, great numbers of the army were cut off by some pestilential disease, which the medical knowledge of Machaon did not enable him to cure, it would be unreasonable to doubt. And would it not be equally unreasonable to doubt the historical facts related in the book of Tobit, though we do not interpret literally his oriental machinery? or on account of that machinery to neglect the moral lessons with which it abounds, and affect to despise the beautiful simplicity of the tale? As a moral tale founded in fact, it ought undoubtedly to be received; as such it appears to have been alluded to by Polycarp (b) early in the second century; and there is not the smallest reason to believe that its author ever expected it to be received as a work of a higher order.]

(a) Sermons, vol. ii. serm. xxix. 1st Ed.

(b) See his Epistle to the Philippians, chap. 3. Wake's translation.

A. M. 3246,
&c. or 4772.
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758, &c.
or 639.

the Lord, in the time of Josiah king of Judah, consisted of the whole Pentateuch, or only of that part of it which is called Deuteronomy; and whether it was the authentic copy which Moses committed to the priest's custody, or only some ancient manuscript kept in the temple for the public use, viz. for the king to read to the people once every seven years, or for the priests to consult upon any emergent difficulty, is a matter of some debate among the learned. The testimony of the author of the book of Chronicles seems however to determine the matter, when he assures us, that the book of the law which Hilkiah found, was that (a) "which was given by the hand of Moses," and consequently the whole Pentateuch which by his command was repositied (b) "in the side of the ark of the covenant."

It is presumed, indeed, that Josiah's three predecessors, Ahaz, Manasseh, and Amon, as not content to be impious themselves, and to instigate their subjects to idolatry, had made it their business to burn and destroy all the copies of the law that they could anywhere meet with, so that there was not so much as one left for the king's use; and that this was the reason of his discovering so great a surprise at his hearing the comminations read, because he had never perhaps seen any such volume before. It must be acknowledged, indeed, that disuse often cancels the most excellent laws; and from Josiah's surprise, we have room to suspect that he had not as yet transcribed a copy of the law with his own hand, and had probably for some time neglected the reading it publicly, (c) "every seventh year, according to the command. But that he had never seen a transcript of it before this time, we can hardly believe, because it is not conceivable how he could so early apply himself to the service of God, even in opposition to the corruptions of the times; how he could begin the reformation of religion, the abolishment of idolatry and superstition, and the establishment of so many wholesome ordinances for the Divine worship, without the assistance and direction of this book.

In this very year we are told, that such a passover was solemnized (d) "as had not been kept from the days of Samuel the prophet, nor among all the kings of Israel." But how the priests could have observed all the rites and ceremonies belonging to it, (which are not a few) if every prescribed form of it had been lost, we cannot conceive; since copies of the book, which was now found in the temple, could not be made and transcribed time enough for their instruction in these particulars.

In the reigns of Jehoshaphat and Hezekiah copies of the law (e) were common enough, and in the reigns of their wicked successors, the Sacred History makes no mention of their being burnt or destroyed. The Jewish doctors indeed tell us, that Manasseh blotted the sacred name of Jehovah out of all the books that he could find; but they nowhere report that he utterly abolished them. [Nay, there is very complete proof that copies of the law abounded even among the ten tribes in the reign of Hezekiah king of Judah, and among the remnant of those tribes that were left in the land, even in the reign of his great grandson Josiah, above eighty years afterwards. In both these reigns, we find numbers of Israelites uniting with the people of Judah to keep the passover solemnly at Jerusalem, "according to the law of Moses, the man of God;" but this they could not have done, and in the former instance would not have been permitted to do, had not they and their rulers been well acquainted with the law, and convinced of its authenticity*. But if the ten tribes, which had so long been restrained by their idolatrous kings from frequenting the temple, still preserved among them copies of the law,] it is impossible to doubt but that, in the kingdom of Judah, there were at this time many copies of that sacred code, though some of them perhaps were corrupt or imperfect; and therefore the high priest had reason to rejoice when he had found the origi-

(a) 2 Chron. xxxiv. 14.

(b) Deut. xxxi. 26.

(c) Ibid. ver. 10, 11.

(d) 2 Chron. xxxv. 18.

(e) Chap. xvii. 9.

* [See this fact ably urged, not only for the authenticity, but also for the Divine origin of the law, by *Dr Graves*, in his valuable *Lectures on the four last books of the Pentateuch*.]

nal, because by it all the other copies might be corrected; and rejoice the more that he had found it at a time when the king was going to make a reformation in religion, which he could not but look upon as a very remarkable providence.

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The four evangelists, who have recorded the substance of the Christian religion, we have by us, and may read therein every day; and yet who can say, but that some remarkable passage may perchance escape his observation? (a) But now, if, by some lucky accident, we should happen to find the original of St Matthew, or St John, who can doubt, but that we should both read and listen to it with more seriousness and attention, than we now do the same books that are every day in our hands? And, in like manner, we may say, that it was the great reverence which Josiah bore to the original book of Moses, as well as the seasonable and remarkable finding it at this time, that awakened and quickened him to a more attentive consideration of all the passages contained in it, than ever he had known before, either in his reading or hearing the ordinary copies of the law.

Manasseh was certainly, in the former part of his reign, a very impious prince. The Scripture seems to imply, that, till his miseries had rectified his notions, (b) he did not believe at all in the God of Israel, nor in the history of his forefathers; but he is not the only son that has degenerated from the good example of a pious father, neither were his subjects the only people that, even in the grossest irreligion and profaneness, have imitated the example of their prince. The wonder is, how both prince and people became, upon every occasion, so prone to fall from the religion of their ancestors into idolatry, notwithstanding the frequent remonstrances on God's part to the contrary? Now, to this purpose it may be observed, (c) that in the whole compass of the law, there is no express revelation made of a future life; that the hints which are given of it are too obscure for every common reader rightly to interpret; [that, though the rewards and punishments of a future state were not necessary to enforce obedience to the law, whilst that equal Providence which resulted from the *theocracy* was strictly administered, the case was now in some degree altered; and that the obscurity which still hung over the state beyond the grave] might be a means of throwing the ancient Israelites into idolatrous practices. For as they had no certain hopes of another life to rely on, they could not see neighbouring nations in a more flourishing condition without some uneasiness and perturbation of mind; and from hence, by degrees, they might fall into this opinion,—That the gods of these nations must needs be more mighty and powerful than the God of Israel, since their worshippers were manifestly more prosperous; and from hence they were induced to forsake the God of their ancestors, and to worship the gods of the heathen, though a very little reflection would have convinced them, that they had never been less prosperous than their neighbours, but when they forsook the God of their fathers.

It may be observed farther, that the difficulty of keeping the Mosaic law, especially in what related to its rites and ceremonies, was very great, and the profit which resulted from thence no ways comparable to the trouble which it occasioned; and from thence they might be tempted to shake off (d) “a yoke which neither they nor their forefathers were able to bear,” and betake themselves to the observance of other laws more easy and commodious in themselves, and such as they supposed productive of much more benefit and prosperity to the observers of them. Nor should it be forgotten, that as a great part of the revenues of Palestine, according to the constitution of the Mosaic law, fell to the lot of the priests and Levites, the laity upon every occasion might grow weary of paying so much; and thereupon be inclined to any innovation in religion that should

(a) Calmet's Commentary on 2 Kings xxii. 8.
Commentary on 2 Kings xxv. 11.

(b) 2 Chron. xxxiii. 13.
(d) Acts xv. 10.

(c) Le Clercq's

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offer itself, if it could but be supported at an easier expence *. And accordingly we may observe, that, in the wicked reigns of Ahaz and Manasseh, when the temple was either quite shut up, or converted to idolatrous purposes, the payment of tithes and oblations was suspended (which might be a great gratification to the people), until, in the reigns of Hezekiah and Josiah, they were again restored to the ministers of God. These, and such reasons as these, might make the ancient Hebrews so unsettled in their obedience to the law of Moses, until the time that a clearer and more perfect revelation of a future life extended their views and hopes above the things of this world, and made them more constant and immoveable (as the author to the Hebrews (a) bears them testimony) in the worship of the true God.

Josiah may be thought by some to have followed the dictates of his zeal a little too far, in destroying the images, and altars, and other monuments of idolatry in the kingdom of Israel, where he had neither any regal nor judicial authority. But it should be remembered, that his authority in this regard was founded upon an ancient prediction, (b) where he is particularly named and appointed to this work of reformation by God himself, and that, consequently, he could not be guilty of an infringement upon another's right, even though he had no farther commission. But the ten tribes, we are to consider, being now gone into captivity, the ancient right which David and his posterity had to the whole kingdom of Israel (before it was dismembered by Jeroboam and his successors) devolved upon Josiah. The people who escaped the captivity were united with his subjects, and put themselves under his protection. They came to the worship of God at Jerusalem, and did doubtless gladly comply with his extirpation of idolatry; at which the Cuthites, the new inhabitants of the country, who worshipped their gods in another manner, were not at all offended.

The kings of Assyria, it is true, were the lords and conquerors of the country; but from the time of Manasseh's restoration, they seem to have conferred upon the kings of Judah (who might thereupon become their homagers) a sovereignty in all the land of Canaan, to the same extent wherein it was held by David and Solomon before it was divided into two kingdoms. So that Josiah, upon sundry pretensions, had sufficient power and authority to visit the kingdom of Israel, and to purge it from idolatry as well as his own.

And this, by the bye, suggests the reason why that good king was so very strenuous in opposing the king of Egypt when he demanded a passage through his country. (c) He was now, as we said, an homager, and ally to the king of Babylon, and under a strict oath to adhere to him against all his enemies, especially against the Egyptians, and to defend the land of Canaan (which was one barrier of the empire) against their invasions; and being under such an obligation to his sovereign paramount, he could not permit his enemy to pass through his country, in order to make war upon him, and not

* [This is not a judicious observation. In the kingdom of Israel, where idolatry was more prevalent than in Judah, there were after the revolt no priests and Levites to whom any part of the public revenues were to be paid by the law of Moses. At the revolt from the house of David and the setting up of the golden calves, the priests and Levites withdrew from the dominions of Jeroboam into the kingdom of Judah; so that it could not have been in consequence of the payment of *tithes* enjoined by the *Mosaic law* that the ten tribes were so prone to *idolatry*. Neither is there the smallest reason to believe that the people of Judah ever made this a reason, even to themselves, for apostatizing from the religion of their fathers. They could not indeed be so absurd as to imagine, even for a moment, that *they* paid any

thing to the priests and Levites; for the God of their fathers had often told them that the whole land, which they occupied, was *HIS*; that *HE* had divided it equally according to their numbers, among all the tribes except that of Levi; that the Levites had equally with their brethren a natural right to their proportion of the land; but that *HE*, their God and King, had assigned to them the tithes instead of their proportion of the soil, because they were to be dispersed over the whole kingdom for the general instruction of the people, which rendered it impossible for them to occupy a province and live together as a tribe.] On this subject see *Graves's* admirable Lectures on the Pentateuch.

(a) Chap. xi. 35, &c.

(b) 1 Kings xiii. 2.

(c) *Prideaux's* Connection, anno 610.

oppose him, without incurring a breach of his oath, and a violation of that fidelity which, in the name of his God, he had sworn to the king of Babylon; and this was a thing which so good and just a man as Josiah was could not but detest.

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It was the sense of his duty, therefore, and not any rashness of temper, or opposition to the Divine will, that engaged Josiah in this war with the king of Egypt. The king of Egypt indeed sent to him to acquaint him, that (a) "God was with him," and that therefore opposing him would be "fighting against God." But Josiah knew very well, that he was an heathen prince, who had no knowledge of the Lord Jehovah, nor had ever consulted his oracles or prophets; and had therefore sufficient reason to believe, that by the god who, as he pretended, had sent him upon this expedition, he intended no other than the false Egyptian god, whom he served, but whom the king of Judah had no reason to regard.

The truth is, whenever the word *God* occurs in this message from Necho to Josiah, it is not expressed in the Hebrew original by the word *Jehovah*, which is the proper name of the true God, but by the word *Elohim*, which, being in the plural number, is equally applicable to the false gods of the heathens (and is the very word that is used to denote them whenever they are spoken of), as well as the true God. But even suppose that Necho, in his embassy to Josiah, had made use of the proper name of the true God; yet was not Josiah therefore bound to believe him, because we find Sennacherib, when he came up against Judah, sending Hezekiah word, (b) that the Lord (*Jehovah* in the Hebrew) had ordered him to go up against the land and destroy it; and yet it is certain, that Sennacherib, in so pretending, lied to Hezekiah; and why then might not Josiah have as good reason to conclude that Necho, in the same pretence, might have lied likewise? Necho, however, in his message, by using the word *Elohim*, gave Josiah to understand, that by the false gods of Egypt he was sent upon that expedition; and therefore Josiah could not be liable to any blame for not hearkening to the words which came from them.

His death indeed was sudden and immature: He fell in battle against the Egyptians; and yet he may be said to have "gone to his grave in peace," because he was recalled from life whilst his kingdom was in a prosperous condition, before the calamities where-with it was threatened were come upon it, and whilst himself was in peace and reconciliation with God. Thus, when (c) "the righteous are taken away from the evil to come," though (d) "in the sight of the unwise they seemed to die, and their departure is taken for misery;" yet, in what manner soever their exit be, they may well be said to "die in peace," who, after their dissolution here, (e) "are numbered among the children of God, and their lot is among the saints."

(f) "Truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun," says the wise preacher. The love of life is natural to us, and in our very frame and constitution is implanted the fear of death; so that it requires no small compass of thought, and serious consideration, to receive the sentence of our dissolution with a proper composure of mind. The common excuse of human infirmity might therefore apologize for Hezekiah's conduct, had we nothing more to say in his behalf; but this is far from being all.

The message which God sent him by the prophet Isaiah was, that he should die, i. e. that his distemper, according to the natural course of things, was mortal, and above the power of human art to cure. But this denunciation was not absolute and irreversible. It implied a tacit condition, even as did Jonah's prediction of the destruction of Nineveh, which the repentance of its inhabitants prevented, as Hezekiah's humiliation retarded the time of his death. At this time, however, he was no more than nine and

(a) 2 Chron. xxxv. 21.

(b) 2 Kings xviii. 25.

(c) Isaiah lvii. 1.

(d) Wisd. iii. 2.

(e) Ibid. v. 5.

(f) Eccles. ix. 7.

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thirty years old, nor had he as yet any son ; for Manasseh was not born till three years after his illness. The Assyrians too were now making great preparations to invade his kingdom ; for his sickness was prior to their invasion, though, in the course of the history, it is placed immediately after it. Putting all these considerations together then, the king had sundry reasons, besides the natural aversion which all men have to death, to be concerned at its approach, and to desire a prolongation of his life.

Length of days, and a peaceable enjoyment of old age, was a promise which God had made to his faithful servants, and the reward that he usually paid them in hand ; (a) and therefore Hezekiah was apt to look upon himself as under the displeasure of God for his being so hastily summoned away, and this premature death of his, as a kind of token of his final reprobation. In himself he saw the royal family of David extinct, and all the hopes of having the Messiah born of his race become abortive. He saw the storm that was gathering, and threatening his country with desolation, while there was none of his family to succeed in his throne, and all things were in danger of running into anarchy and confusion : And therefore, having this prospect before his eyes, he might well melt into tears at the apprehensions of his approaching death, which would extinguish all his hopes, and consummate all his fears, in making him go down childless to the grave. [To all this let us candidly add, what cannot be denied, that Hezekiah's prospects beyond the grave appear to have been far from clear or decided (b), though they were probably brighter afterwards ; and his earnest wish to live some time longer, cannot seem either wonderful or indicative of unmanly timidity.]

What his distemper was the Scripture has no where expressly told us : The original word denotes an inflammation ; but what kind of inflammation it was, or what part of the body it affected, we have no intimation given us : And therefore, being thus left to conjecture, some have thought it an imposthume ; others, a plague-sore ; and others a quinsey ; being all led in their opinions by what (c) the naturalists have told us of the virtue of the medicine that was here applied for cure, viz. that figs, in a decoction, are good to disperse any inflammation about the glands, by gargling the throat ; and that, in a cataplasm, they wonderfully soften and ripen any hard tumour. But whatever the quality of the medicine might be, that there was a Divine interposition in the whole affair is evident, both from the speediness of the cure, and the nature of the sign which God gave Hezekiah, in order to convince him of it.

Some very considerable writers would endeavour to persuade us, that, before the Babylonish captivity, the Jews had no instruments whereby to measure time, nor any terms in their language whereby to denote the distinct gradation of it ; which, were it true, would effectually destroy all that the Scripture relates, both concerning this sundial which Ahaz set up, and the famous miracle which was wrought upon it : But who the first inventors of such horological instruments were, it is not so easy a matter to determine.

(d) The Egyptians, who always loved to magnify the glory of their nation, and to lay claim to the invention of every learned science or curious art, pretend, that machines of this kind were in use among them many years before they appeared in other nations. To this purpose, (e) their historians have observed, that in Acantha, a town situate on the Nile, there was every day a large vessel filled with water, which, as it sunk gradually by running out at a small passage, distinguished the several hours of the day ; and that all the clepsydræ, or water hour-glasses, among the Greeks and Romans, were afterwards formed upon this model.

The Baby onians were a people well versed in all parts of astronomy, and it was from them (as Herodotus (f) observes) that the Greeks had the pole and the gnomon, and

(a) *Le Clerc's Commentary* on 2 Kings xx. 3. (b) See Isaiah xxxviii. 18, 19. (c) *Dioscor. lib. i. c. 183. Pliny, lib. xxiii. c. 7.* (d) *Vid. Usher ad A. M. 3291. et Jaquelot, Dissert. i. sur l'Exist. de Dieu, c. 16.* (e) *Herod. lib. i. et Strabo, lib. ii. c. 109.* (f) *Lib. ii. p. 76.*

the twelve parts of the day. For Anaximander, (whom Pliny by mistake calls Anaximenes) who first taught them to distinguish time, travelled into Chaldea for the improvement of knowledge, and from thence brought away this useful invention. Anaximander indeed is said to have flourished about two hundred years after this; but as the Scripture informs us, that there was a good deal of intimacy between Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria and Ahaz king of Judah, it is not improbable that, as he was taken with the figure of a strange altar when he went to visit that prince at Damascus, he might then likewise see some of the sun-dials (for sun-dials might be common in Chaldea though not in other countries) which Tiglath-pileser was accustomed to carry along with him for the mensuration of time wherever he went; and being highly delighted with so curious and useful an invention, might either have one made on the spot, or take the model of one, to be made at Jerusalem, and set up in his royal palace.

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It is no easy matter to determine of what form the sun-dial was, but, (a) if we may be allowed to gather any thing from the signification of the word *Mahal*, (which is always used in this narration) we may, with the learned Grotius, suppose that it was not horizontal, (as sun-dials are commonly made,) but of a concave hemispherical figure*, (much like what the Greeks call σκάφη,) and that therein was a gnomon of some kind or other, which cast its shadow upon the lines engraven in its concavity.

But of what make soever this dial was, we have reason to believe, that the recess of its shadow was a real miracle, and not the effect of any natural cause, viz. the interposition of a cloud, or any other meteor, which might divert the rays of the sun to another part of the dial for some small space of time.

The account which we have of this event, in the second book of Kings, makes no mention indeed of the sun's going back, but only of the shadow upon the dial; but in the book of Isaiah's prophecy, wherein we have this miracle more minutely related, we are told expressly, that (b) "the sun returned ten degrees;" and from hence the opinion of the ancients, both Jews and Christians, has been, that the miracle was wrought, not upon the shadow*, but upon the body of the sun; or "that the sun, (as our ex-

(a) *Calmet's* Dissert. sur la Retrogradation, &c.

* Other authors are of an opinion quite contrary to this.—They suppose, that as there is no mention made of any sun-dials in all the works of Homer, and the Jews, very probably, knew nothing of the division of the day into so many hours till after the time of the captivity, the invention of such machines was subsequent to Hezekiah's days; and therefore, from the word *ἀνακαθήμενος* in the Septuagint, which may properly enough be rendered *steps* or *stairs*, they infer, that this famous chronometron of king Ahaz was nothing but a flight of stairs leading up to the gate of the palace, and, according to the projection of the sun, marked at proper distances with figures denoting the division of the day, and not any regular piece of dial-work. *Universal History*, lib. i. c. 7. But this is too poor a thing to be recorded in history as the invention or erection of a king, which every private person might have as well as he.

(b) Isaiah xxxviii. 8.

* Those who maintain the contrary opinion, viz. That the whole miracle was wrought upon the dial, and occasioned only by the reversion of the sun's beams, while the sun proceeded in its ordinary course, urge in its defence,—That in 2 Kings xx. 9. where this miracle is recorded, mention is only made of the "shadow's going back;" and though, in Isaiah xxxviii. 8. the "sun is said to return ten degrees,"

yet to put the sun for its beams is a common mode of speech in all languages. That the division of the day into hours (upon which the invention of all horoscopical instruments must depend) was of later date than this: That Daniel is the first writer in the Old Testament who makes any mention of it; and that there is no Hebrew word in the compass of the whole language to denote it. As therefore the intent of this miracle was, not to lengthen the day, as that of Joshua's, but purely to put back the shadow upon the sun-dial, this might have well enough been done, say they, by the sole refraction of the sun's rays, and without giving any interruption to the course of nature. This interruption, if the recess and return of the sun (or the earth if we please) was gradual, must have occasioned great inconveniences to mankind upon earth; since, if the degrees were horary, or lines of an hour's distance upon the dial plate, (as we now speak) to make the sun recede ten hours, and after that re-advance ten more, this would have been to prolong that day for twenty hours, which, in hot regions, would be enough to scorch the people of the hemisphere that the sun was over, and in colder climates, when it happened to be absent so long, to freeze the inhabitants to death. On the other hand, this interruption, if the sun or earth went back in an instant, and returned as hastily again, must have been seen and felt all the world over, been observed by

A. M. 3246, cellent Archbishop Usher (*a*) expresses it,) and all the heavenly bodies went back, and as much was detracted from the next night as was added to this day.”

&c. or 1772.
Ant. Chris.
758, &c. or
639.

Those who embrace the new philosophy, which places the sun in the centre, and supposes the earth to move round it, have, from their hypothesis, no difficulty in admitting of this miracle, whether it be said to consist in the different determination of the rays, or in the retrogradation of the body of the sun; because it is the same thing as to all outward effects, whether the earth turn round the sun, or the sun round the earth: But in both cases there is this difficulty,—(*b*) That the sudden and violent motion either of the sun or earth, to make that day and night of no greater length than the rest, would be in danger of shocking or unhinging the whole frame of nature, as it certainly would have done, had it not been guided and directed by the steady and unerring hand of the Great Creator of the universe, whose motion he can either retard or accelerate as he pleases, without occasioning any confusion in the order of things, and with much greater facility to himself, than any human artificer can cause a machine of his own making to go swifter or slower by the sole suspension of an heavier or lighter weight.

Since the Scripture, therefore, in this case, tells us as plainly, that the sun did recede, as, in the case of Joshua, that it did stand still in the firmament of heaven, we have no other warrant but to take words in their literal sense, even though it be attended with some difficulties. These difficulties arise chiefly from the opposition of some modern systems of philosophy; but whether it be just and reasonable, that revelation should conform to philosophy, or philosophy to revelation, especially when the expressions of Scripture are clear, and sentiments of philosophers but mere conjectures, is a question that need require no long deliberation; especially since heavenly bodies, by reason of their vast distance, are inaccessible to our utmost sagacity, and the greater part of the secrets of nature are not discoverable by our most indefatigable search after truth*.

the astronomers then living, and recorded in the writings of subsequent historians, as well as the sun's standing still in Joshua's time; but since we find no footsteps of this, on the contrary, by Merodach Bala-dan's sending to Hezekiah to inform himself about this phænomenon, it is rather evident, that the thing had not been observed as far as Babylon; they thence infer, that there was no reason for God's putting himself to the expence of so prodigious a miracle, as to make an alteration in the whole fabric of the universe, when a bare refraction of the sun's rays upon the dial-plate would have answered the end as well. *Le Clerc's Commentary. Lowth's Commentary on Isaiah xxxviii. and Universal History, lib. i. c. 7.* See also our Dissertation on the Sun's standing still upon Gibeon, &c.

(*a*) Annal. A. 3291.

(*b*) *Calmet's Dissert. sur la Retrogradation, &c.*

* [All this would be perfectly right, had the inspired Scripture told us plainly that the sun did indeed recede; but the Scripture hath told us no such thing. In the second book of the Kings, where we have the fullest and most circumstantial account of this miracle, no mention whatever is made of the sun but only of the shadow going back ten degrees; and this could be accomplished by an alteration of the density of some portion of the atmosphere over the dial of Ahaz. In the thirty eighth chapter of Isaiah's prophecies, God says—"Behold, I will bring again the shadow of the degrees, which is gone down in the sun-dial of Ahaz ten degrees backward;" but he says

not one word of the sun, or of the means by which this miracle was to be wrought. The writer of the narrative indeed—probably the prophet himself—adds, "So the sun returned ten degrees, by which degrees it was gone down;" but the word שָׁמַשׁ here translated sun means not the body of the sun, but the solar light. This the reader will find completely proved in Parkhurst's Hebrew Lexicon; but were the case otherwise, we could only infer that the prophet made use of popular language, just as a Newtonian philosopher does, when he talks of the sun rising and going down, though he believes that, in strictness of speech, he does neither the one nor the other, the phenomena of sun rising and sun setting being produced by the rotation of the earth on its axis. Let it be observed too, that though we were certain (as we are almost certain of the reverse) that the prophet really believed the sun himself and all the planets with him to have been turned ten degrees back on that occasion, or rather that the earth had been made to roll back on its axis ten degrees from east to west, we are not called upon by any principle of religion to adopt his opinion. Isaiah, though inspired with the knowledge of the future fortunes of his country, and of the kingdom to be erected by the promised Messiah, was not taught by inspiration the principles of astronomy or the laws of optics; and therefore, though the phenomenon of the shadow returning on the sun-dial must, and will readily, be admitted by every man of reflection, because God had said that he

(a) Though at first view we may be apt to think, that a sign, which precedes the event, is more significant, because better adapted to our manner of conceiving it, than one which follows after it; yet, upon a nearer examination, we shall find, that a sign which is posterior to the event, is not a less, but in some respects a more convincing proof than the other; especially when the person to whom it is given lives to see both the sign and the event accomplished. The sign which goes before the event proves but one thing, viz. that the event was from God, or that the person who foretold it was divinely inspired; but the sign which is future to the event manifests these three things: 1st, That the person who foretold it was possessed with the spirit of prophecy; 2dly, That God was the author of the miraculous event which he foretold; and, 3dly, That he was the author likewise of the sign which followed the miracle, especially if the sign be miraculous, as it generally is.

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To apply this now to the case before us. To convince Hezekiah of his approaching deliverance, God gave him such things for a sign as would not come to pass until his deliverance was accomplished; but then it should be remembered, that as the people were to be convinced, that what happened to Sennacherib was not the work of chance, or the effect of natural causes, but immediately inflicted by the hand of God, his prophet was to foretel, not only the particulars of what befel him, but such consequences likewise as would appear not only to be supernatural, but demonstrations likewise of the Divine power and goodness. To this purpose Isaiah is sent, not only to foretel Hezekiah's deliverance, the destruction of the Assyrian army, and the death of Sennacherib; but to fortify the people against the apprehensions of another enemy, viz. a grievous famine, after that Sennacherib was gone, he is ordered to add, that God would find one means or other to preserve his people. Though the enemy will destroy all the corn in the country, "yet ye shall eat this year (says the prophet) such things as ye can meet with:" Though the next be the year of Jubilee, or Sabbatical year, in which ye are to let the land rest, "yet ye shall eat such things as grow of themselves;" (b) God shall take care, one way or other, that ye shall want no provisions these two years; and in the third year there shall be no enemy to molest you, and therefore "sow and reap the fruit of your labours:" For though ye have been brought low with losses innumerable and persecutions, yet, in a short time, ye shall be re-established; for the "remnant that is escaped of Judah shall yet again take root downward, and bear fruit upward."

The like may be said of the sign concerning the "virgin that was to bear a Son, and call his name Immanuel;" though it was some hundred years subsequent to the deliverance which God promised Judah, yet was it of great service to confirm the people in their expectations of it. To this purpose we may observe, that it is not to Ahaz that the prophet addresses himself (for he, out of a specious pretence of not being willing to tempt God, rejected all signs), but to the princes of the blood royal; and therefore he says, (c) "Hear ye now, ye house of David, the Lord himself will give you a sign, a virgin shall conceive." The original word *Alma* (as (d) several learned men have observed), signifies almost always *a virgin untainted by a man*, is so rendered by the Septuagint in this place, and cannot, with any propriety, denote (e) any indifferent young woman, who should afterwards be married, and have a son. For how can we imagine, that, after so pompous an introduction, the prophet should mean no more

would produce it, we are not therefore bound to believe that the means employed for this purpose, were such as the Israelites in general, or even the prophet himself, may have supposed. The event is certain and was but *one*; whilst the means of producing it may have been *many*, all equally easy to Omnipotence, though, as miracles are not to be multiplied

needlessly, they are not all equally credible.]

(a) Calmet's Commentary, on 2 Kings xix. 29.

(b) Lowth's Commentary, on Isaiah xxxvii. 33.

(c) Isaiah vii. 13, 14.

(d) Vid. Kidder's Demonstration, part ii.

(e) Vid. Grounds and Reasons of the Christian Religion.

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or 639.

at last by a virgin's conceiving, than that a young woman should be with child? What! does Isaiah offer Ahaz a miracle, "either in the depth, or in the height above?" And when he seems to tell the house of David, that God, of his own accord, would perform a greater work than they could ask, does he sink to a sign *that*, which nature produces every day? Is that to be called a wonder (which implies an uncommon, surprising, and supernatural event), which happens constantly by the ordinary laws of generation? How little does such a birth answer the solemn apparatus which the prophet uses to raise their expectation of some great matter? "Hear ye, O house of Judah;—behold, the Lord will give you a sign" worthy of himself. And what is that? Why, a young married woman shall be with child. How ridiculous must such a declaration make the prophet! And how highly must it enrage the audience, to hear a man, at such a juncture as this, begin an idle and impertinent tale, which seems to banter and insult their misery, rather than administer any consolation under it!

It is to be observed farther, that, in the beginning of this passage, when God commanded Isaiah to go and meet Ahaz, he ordered him to take with him his son Shear-jashub, who was then but a child. Why the child was to accompany his father, we can hardly suppose any other reason, but that he was to be of use some way or other to enforce the prophecy. It is but supposing then, that the prophet, in uttering the words, "Before this child shall be able to distinguish between good and evil," (*a*) pointed at his own son (for there is no necessity to refer them to Immanuel), who might then either stand by him, or be held in his arms, and all the difficulty is solved: But then the comfort which accrued to the house of David from this seasonable prophecy was very considerable. For (*b*) it assured them of the truth and veracity of God's promise, and that he would not suffer them to be destroyed, nor the sceptre to depart from Judah, until the Messiah came. It assured them of his Almighty power, in that he could create a new thing in the earth, by making a virgin to conceive, and thereby shew himself able to deliver them out of the hands of their most potent enemies; and it assured them likewise of his peculiar favour, in that he had decreed the Messiah should descend from their family, so that the people to whom he had vouchsafed so high a dignation, might depend on his promise, and under the shadow of his wings think themselves secure.

DISSERTATION IV.

OF THE TRANSPORTATION OF THE TEN TRIBES, AND THEIR RETURN.

NOTHING (*c*) in history is more common, than to see whole nations so changed in their manners, their religion, their language, and the very places of their abode, as that it becomes a matter of some difficulty to find out their first original. Large empires swallow up lesser states; and in the course of their conquests, sweeping every thing before them like a torrent, they compel the vanquished to follow the fate of their conquerors, and to inhabit such countries as were unknown to them before.

(*a*) *Usher's Annal.* A. M. 3263.

(*b*) *Vid. Kidder's Demonstration.*

(*c*) *Calmet's Dissert.* sur la Pais, ou les dix Tribus, &c.

Never was there a people that had a more ample experience of these unhappy revolutions than the kingdom of Israel, which, upon the revolt of Rehoboam, came to be called the "kingdom of the ten tribes." God, by the mouth of his servant Moses, had denounced this judgment upon them in case of their obstinate disobedience to his law : (a) "The Lord shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth to the other ; and among all these nations, thou shalt find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest." And accordingly, when, by their idolatry and other grievous impieties, they had provoked God to wrath, and "filled up the measure of their iniquity," in the reign of Pekah king of Israel, (b) he sent Tiglath-Pileser king of Assyria, who invaded his country, and having over-run great part of it, carried away captive the tribes of Naphtali, Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh, from the east side of the river Jordan ; and about twenty years after this, in the reign of Hoshea, sent his son Shalmaneser against Samaria, who, after a siege of three years, took it, and carried away all the remainder of that miserable people, according to what the prophet Hoshea had foretold ; (c) "Ephraim is smitten, their root is dried up, they shall bear no fruit.—My God shall cast them away, because they did not hearken unto him, and they shall be wanderers among the nations."

From 1 Kings.
viii. to the end
of 2 Chron.

Such (with very small exception) has been the case of this unhappy people ever since the time of the Assyrian captivity ; and yet, such is their pride and arrogance, that instead of owning the truth, they have devised fables of their living all along in great prosperity and grandeur in some unknown land, as a national and united body, in an independent state, and under monarchies or republics of their own. So that, before we begin to enquire into the real places of their transportation, and some other circumstances thereunto belonging, it may not be amiss to examine a little the merit of these pretensions, and what foundations they have for such mighty boasts.

The author of the second book of Esdras informs us, (d) "That the ten tribes, being taken prisoners by Shalmaneser, and carried beyond the river Euphrates, entered into a resolution of quitting the Gentiles, and retiring into a country never inhabited before, that they might there religiously observe the law, which they had too much neglected in their own land ; that to this purpose they crossed the Euphrates, where God wrought a miracle for their sakes, by stopping the sources of that great river, and drying up its channel for them to pass over ; that having thus wonderfully passed this river, they proceeded in their journey for a year and a half, till they arrived at last at a country called Arsareth, where they settled themselves, and were to continue until the latter days, when God would appoint their return, and work the same miracle in passing the Euphrates that he had done for them before."

This is the substance of our author's account : but now, who can believe that a people so fond of Idolatry in their own country, should, in their state of captivity, be so zealous for the observation of the law ? Arsareth, we are told, is a city in Media, situate beyond the river Araxes ; but if this was the place they betook themselves to for the freer exercise of their religion, what need was there for so very long a peregrination ? Or who can suppose, that their imperious masters would suffer captives, upon any pretence whatever, to retreat in a body out of their country, and set up a distinct kingdom in another place ? (e) In short, this counterfeit Esdras, who seems to have been a Christian, and to have lived about the end of the first, or the beginning of the second century, is not only so inconsistent in his account of this, and several other transactions, but so fond of uncertain traditions, and so romantic and fabulous about the Divine inspiration which he boasts of, that there is no credit to be given to what he says concerning the retreat of the ten tribes into an unknown land.

(a) Deut. xxviii. 64, 65.

(b) 2 Kings xv. 29.

(c) Hosea ix. 16, 17.

(d) 2 Esdras xiii. 40, &c.

(e) Basnag. Hist. des Juif. lib. vi. c. 2.

A. M. 3246,
&c. or 4772.
Ant. Chris.
758, &c.
or 639.

A famous Jewish traveller (*a*) of the twelfth century, and who seems to have undertaken his travels only to discover the state of his dispersed brethren, assigns them a large and spacious country, wherein reigned two brothers, decendants of the house of David. The elder of these (as he tells us) was Annas, who (besides his capital Thema) had many other cities, castles, and fortresses, and an extent of ground which could not be travelled over under sixteen days. The other, whose name was Salmon, had in his dominions forty cities, two hundred boroughs, and an hundred castles. His subjects (who were all Jews) were three hundred thousand; Tanai, which was his capital, contained an hundred thousand; and Tilimosa a strong city, situate between two mountains, where he usually resided, as many inhabitants.

Here we have a spacious country of nothing but Jews: but the author who pretends to have been there, has so mistaken the situation of several places that he mentions, and gives us such fabulous accounts of the manner of the Persians fishing for pearls; of the virtue of the prophet Daniel's tomb; and of some Turks who had two holes in the midst of their face instead of a nose; that a man must be very fond of romances, who can give credit to what seems to be calculated on purpose to flatter the pride of a people who are still foolishly vain, though under the rejection of Almighty God.

Another Jewish author (*b*), in his description of the world, has found out very commodious habitations for the ten tribes, and in many places has given them a glorious establishment. In a country which he calls Perricha, enclosed by unknown mountains, and bounded by Assyria, he has settled some, and made them a flourishing and populous kingdom. Others he places in the desert of Chabor, which (according to him) lies upon the Indian Sea, where they live in the manner of the ancient Rechabites, without houses, sowing, or the use of wine. Nay, he enters the Indies likewise, and peoples the banks of the Ganges, the isles of Bengala, the Philipines, and several other places with the Jews, to whom he assigns a powerful king called Daniel, who had three other kings tributary and dependant on him. But this is all of the same piece, a forged account to aggrandize their nation, and to make it be believed (*c*), that "the sceptre is not departed from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet," and that Shiloh, consequently, is not yet come.

Manasseh, one of the most famous Rabbins of the last age, has asserted the transmigration of the ten tribes into Tartary, where he assigns them a great province, called *Thabor*, which in the Hebrew tongue signifies a *navel*, because this Thabor (as he says) is one of the middle provinces of Tartary. Ortelius in his Geography, is not only of the same opinion, but in confirmation of it, adds, that the ten tribes succeeded the Scythians, its ancient inhabitants, and took upon them the name of Gauthei, because they were "zealous for the glory of God;" that *Totaces* (the true name of the Tartars) is Hebrew, and signifies *remains*, as the tribes dispersed in the north were the remains of ancient Israel; that among these people there are several plain footsteps of the Jewish religion, besides circumcision; and from them, in all probability, have descended the Jews that in Poland and Muscovy are found so numerous.

(*d*) It cannot be denied, indeed, but that several of the Israelites might pass into Tartary, because Armenia is the only country that parts it from Assyria, whereunto they were primarily carried. But there is no reason for their penetrating Scythia, and thence dispersing themselves in the kingdoms of Poland and Muscovy; because the tranquillity and privileges which the princes of these countries have granted the Jews, are the true cause and motive of their resorting thither in such numbers. In confutation therefore of what has been said above, (*e*) the Jewish historian has well observed, that the ancient Scythians were a people too fierce by nature, and too expert in war, for an

(*a*) *Benjamin de Tudela's Itiner.* p. 99.

(*c*) *Gen.* xlix. 10.

(*b*) *R. Abi Ben Mordochai Peritsul*, of Ferrara:

(*d*) *Basnag.* Hist. des Juif. lib. vi. c. 3.

(*e*) *Ibid.*

handful of fugitives (such as the Israelites were) ever to conquer or expel ; that the people of this country were all along idolaters, until they were converted to the religion of Mahomet, from whence they received the rite of circumcision, and some other ceremonies conformable to the law of Moses ; that the etymology of names is, of all others, the weakest and most precarious argument ; and that it is ridiculous to seek for the glory of God among the Tartars before the introduction of Mahometanism, since, according to the account of their (a) historian, " Some of them lived like beasts, without any sense of God ; others worshipped the sun, moon, and stars ; and others again made gods of the oxen that plowed their land, or prostrated themselves before every great tree."

From 1 Kings
viii. 10. and
of 2 Chron.

Manasseh, the famous Rabbin we lately mentioned, published a book, (b) entitled, " The Hopes of Israel," founded upon the number and power of the Jews in America ; but in this he was imposed upon by the fabulous relation of Montesini, who reported, " That he found a great number of Jews concealed behind the mountains of Cordilleras, which run along Chili in America ; that, continuing his journey in that country, he came at length to the banks of a river, where, upon his giving a signal, there appeared a people, who pronounced in Hebrew these words out of Deuteronomy, " Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord ;" that they looked upon Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as their great progenitors, and had been conducted into that country by incredible miracles : that the Indians had treated them with great cruelty, and thrice declared war against them ; but that, by God's protecting his people against idolaters, they had been as oft defeated, and were now totally destroyed ; and that some of their magi, who made use of enchantments, had openly declared that the God of Israel was the only true God, and that, at the consummation of ages, their nation should become the mistress of the whole universe."

Deluded with this account, Manasseh endeavoured to find out the road which might possibly lead the Israelites into the West Indies ; and, to this purpose, supposing that Asia and America were formerly one continent before they were divided by the streights of Anian, he asserted that the Israelites might travel to America by land before the separation happened.

Sir William Penn, in his present state of the lands of the English in America, tells us, " That the faces of the inhabitants, especially of their children, are so very like the Jews, that when you look upon them, you would think yourself in the Jews quarter in London ; that their eyes are little and black like the Jews ; that they reckon by moons ; offer their first fruits ; have a kind of feast of tabernacles ; and that their language is masculine, short, concise, and full of energy, in which it much resembles the Hebrew."

Other historians (c) have observed, that some of the Americans have a notion of the deluge, though they relate it in a different manner ; that they celebrate a Jubilee every fifth year, and a sabbath every seventh day ; that others observe circumcision, abstain from swine's flesh, and purify themselves by bathing whenever they have touched a dead carcase ; that marriages among others are performed (d) in a manner not unlike what Moses prescribes ; and that they generally believe a resurrection ; (e) for which reason they cause their wives and slaves to be buried with them, that when they arise from their graves they may appear with an attendance suitable to their quality.

(f) This conformity of customs, and looks, and sentiments, have induced several to think that the captive Israelites we are here in quest of, went into America, either by way of China or Tartary, and there settled themselves. But, how specious soever these arguments may appear, there is no manner of solidity in them. To prove a point

(a) *Hailho Armenius*, Lib. de Tartaris, c. 1.
et alios Rerum American. Scrip.
Discovery of Peru, lib. i. c. 12.

(b) *Amsterdam*, 1650.
(d) Deut. xxv. 9.
(f) *Saurin's Dissert.* sur le Pays, &c.

(c) Vid. *Acostan*,
(e) *Zaaret's History of the*

A. M. 3246,
&c. or 4772.
Ant. Chris.
758, &c.
or 639.

of this kind we should produce a whole nation or province in America, distinct from all others in their ceremonies and way of worshipping God, in a manner exactly agreeing with the Hebrews: But to say, that because in one place the people abstain from swine's flesh, and in another they observe the seventh day; in one they offer sacrifices, and in another use baths, when they think themselves polluted, the Americans were originally Israelites, is carrying the consequence a great deal too far, and what indeed we may prove in any other nation under heaven, if we may be allowed to argue in this manner from particulars to generals.

The truth is, the devil, in all his idolatrous countries, has made it his business to mimic God in the rites of his religious worship; or if this were not, there is naturally so great a conformity in mens sentiments concerning these matters, that the Americans might agree with the Jews in the oblation of their first-fruits, their computations by moons, &c. without having any commerce or affinity with them; and though there be something more characteristic in circumcision, yet as several other nations used it, the Americans, upon this account, cannot be Jews, because (if we may believe Acosta, who had made their customs a good part of his study) they never did circumcise their children, and therefore are thus far excluded from being descendants of that race.

Thus have we endeavoured to find out the situation of the ten tribes of Israel, and yet can meet with nothing but either the fabulous accounts of the talmudists, or the uncertain conjectures of modern critics. Let us now have recourse to the Scriptures, and know what the information is that they can supply us with, in this our enquiry.

The Sacred History thus expresses it—(a) “The king of Assyria took Samaria, and carried Israel away into Assyria, and placed them in Halah and in Habor, by the river Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes;” only we must note, that there is some ambiguity in the translation: For, whereas it looks as if Gozan were the river and not Habor, there is plainly no river to be found of the name of Gozan, and therefore the emendation should be—“He placed them in Halah, and by the river Habor in Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes.”

The holy penman, we may observe, distinguishes two places into which the Israelites were carried, (as indeed they were numerous enough to make two different colonies), Assyria and Media. In Assyria we see the river Habor, or Chaboras, which rises from Mount Masius, and, running through Mesopotamia, falls into the Euphrates. Halah, which in Ptolomy is called Chalcitis, is a city and province situate on one side of its banks, and Gozan, which is likewise a city and province, is found on the other: So that the ten tribes were seated in two provinces, which stretched along both sides of this river. An happy situation for them, since they were only separated by a river which watered all the cities that were assigned for their habitation!

(b) As to the cities of the Medes we are more in the dark, because the Scripture does not specify any; but we may presume that this colony was placed in the mountainous part of Media, because it was less peopled than the lower country. It wanted indeed inhabitants, and if we will believe (c) Strabo, was supplied by strangers and colonies from abroad.

The truth is, the ancients have extolled Media as a very happy country. Ecbatana, where the king kept his residence in summer, was one of the finest and largest cities in the world. Susa, where he spent the winter, was a very considerable place likewise: But on the north side there were high mountains, where nevertheless there was good pasturage, so that what the country wanted was good husbandmen, and such as were used to tillage; for which purpose the Israelites, who had made that their principal business in the holy land, were of all other people the fittest inhabitants.

In these two provinces were the ten tribes seated at first; and it is not improbable

(a) 2 Kings xvii. 6.

(b) Basnage, Hist. des Juif. lib. vi. c. 4.

(c) Basnage, *ibid.*

that, in a short time, those of Assyria might extend themselves into several other parts of the empire; for, in Alexander's time, we meet with * a great body of them in Babylon; and that those of Media might stretch upon the right, into the provinces bordering upon the Caspian Sea, (or as (a) some imagine) even beyond that Sea, as far as the river Araxes; but that they ever became so powerful as *² to change the ancient names of places into those of their own language, we can hardly believe; because they fell under so many bitter persecutions, were subject to so many revolutions of the kingdoms where they lived, and, from different princes, underwent such a variety of trans-migrations, that before they could gain any such weight and authority in the world, we find them here and there scattered, in lesser bodies as it were, over the whole face of it.

From 1 Kings
viii. to the end
of 2 Chron.

Not only some of the Greek fathers, but some of our modern critics likewise, have maintained, that the ten tribes were restored with those of Judah and Benjamin, under the conduct of Zorobabel and Nehemiah, when Cyrus and his successors were so kind as to give the Jews in general a full permission to return into their native land. (b) To this purpose they have observed, that several of the prophets who foretold their captivity, with the same breath, as it were, have predicted their return; that, in token of such their return, (c) "twelve goats (for every tribe one) were offered at the dedication of the new temple," which would scarce have been done had ten of these tribes been left behind beyond the Euphrates; that under Nehemiah the Levites confessed the sins of the ten tribes; that in the time of the Maccabees (d) all Palestine was full of Israelites as well as Jews; that (e) St Matthew makes mention of the land of Naphtali; and that St Paul, in his defence before Agrippa, declares, (f) "That for the promise to which the twelve tribes hope to come he was called in question."

It cannot be thought, indeed, but that the love which the Jews, above all other nations, bore to their native country, and the great encouragement which the princes of the East were pleased to grant to forward the re-establishment, might tempt some of each tribe to take this opportunity of returning with the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin; nor can we doubt, but that upon their return they would be apt to assume their former names, and, as far as in them lay, to settle themselves in their ancient possessions. So that, what with those that escaped their conqueror's fury, and remained untransported; those who returned with Ezra, pursuant to the commission which Artaxerxes gave him; and those who took the advantage of the revolutions of the empire, and of the frequent journeys they made to Jerusalem,—great numbers of the ancient inhabitants might be found in the days of the Maccabees, and some of every tribe in our Saviour's time: But that all these returns did never amount to a full restoration of the people, we have abundant testimony to convince us.

* Besides those that were carried thither at the captivity, Artaxerxes sent a new colony of that nation thither, who, when Alexander the Great was for rebuilding the temple of Belus, had the courage to resist him. For whereas other people were eager to furnish materials for the building, they refused to do it, as thinking it had some stain of idolatry. *Basnage*, *ibid*.

(a) *Fuller's* Miscell. Sacr. lib. ii. c. 5.

* We read of the Cadusians, the Geles, and of Arsareth beyond the Caspian Sea; for which reason the learned Fuller supposes, that the Jews spread themselves thus: "For the name of Geles, says he, is Chaldaic, and signifies "*strangers* or *fugitives*, which title suited with the Jews whom God had expelled from their country for their sins. The Chadusians

have a little altered the word *Chadoschim*, which signifies *saints*, which was a title the Jews, who called themselves an holy nation, much affected. And, lastly, Arsareth, the most famous of all the cities built upon the Araxes, had an Hebrew name, signifying the *city of relics*, or the *remains of Israel*." But the author of the History of the Jews, so often cited upon this subject, has confuted the argument drawn from the etymology of the words, and, in particular, shewn, that the Cadusians were a people much antienter in the country than the Israelites, since Ninus reckoned them among his subjects. Lib. vi. c. 4.

(b) *Calmet's* Dissert. sur les Dix Tribus, &c.

(c) 1 Esdras vii. 8.

(d) 1 Maccab. v. 9, 15, &c.

(e) Matth. iv. 15.

(f) Acts xxvi. 7.

A. M. 3216,
&c. or 4772.
Ant. Chris.
758, &c.
or 629.

Josephus (*a*) indeed tells us, that Ezra, upon the receipt of his commission from Artaxerxes, communicated the contents of it to all the Israelites that were in exile, some of whom resorted to Babylon in order to return with him; "but there were then another sort of Israelites (as his words are), who, being wonted to the place, and settled in their habitations, chose rather to continue where they were." Upon the whole, he computes, that few or none, but those of the tribe of Benjamin and Judah, came along with Ezra; and "This is the reason (as he tells us) that in his time there were only two tribes to be found in Asia and Europe, under the Roman empire; for, as for the ten tribes, they are all planted beyond the Euphrates, says he, and so prodigiously increased in number, that they are hardly to be computed." Nay, even those that followed Ezra (according (*b*) to the sentiment of some of the talmudists) were but the dregs of the people, because the nobility and principal men of the house of David still continued in Chaldea.

However this be, it is certain, that Philo, (*c*) in his representation to Caligula, tells him, that Jerusalem ought to be looked upon, not only as the metropolis of Judea, but as the centre of a nation dispersed in infinite places; among which he reckons the isles of Cyprus and Candia, Egypt, Macedonia, and Bithynia; the empire of the Persians, and all the cities of the East, except Babylon, from whence they were then expelled. Nay, prior to this we read, (*d*) that a great number of these orientals appeared at Jerusalem at the feast of Pentecost, when, after our Saviour's ascension, his apostles began to preach the gospel during that festival. It cannot be thought that they were only proselytes whom the Jews of the dispersion had converted; they must have been Jews who came to sacrifice at Jerusalem according to the law: for by St Luke's enumeration of them, it appears that they were the descendants of the tribes that had been long before settled among the (*e*) Medes, among the Parthians, in Mesopotamia, in Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia Minor, &c. and therefore we find St Peter, the apostle of the circumcision, directing his epistle (*f*) "to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia."

Upon the strength of these authorities we may then conclude, that though Artaxerxes, in his commission to Ezra, (*g*) gave free liberty to all Jews whatever that were under his dominions to return to Jerusalem, if they were so minded, which some, without doubt, most gladly embraced; yet the main bulk of the ten tribes, being loth to remove, continued in the land of their captivity, where they are still to be found in great numbers. [This is confirmed to us by the very best modern authorities. The Jews are indeed scattered over the whole world, and everywhere considered, not by Christians only, but also by Mahometans, and even Pagans, as the outcasts of the human race—as a people upon whom rests the curse of God, for some reason of which the pagan idolater can form no conception. At *Cochin*, and through the whole country of *Travancore*, Dr Buchanan got well acquainted with two races of Jews, the one *white*, and the other *black*, like the aboriginal natives of the country. The white Jews he traces by a very plausible process from the general dispersion of the Jews of Jerusalem, first by Titus and afterwards by Adrian; but it is only necessary, he says, to look at the countenance of the black Jews, to be satisfied that their ancestors must have arrived in India many ages before the white Jews. The influence of the climate, and their intermarriages with the natives, have so completely assimilated their complexion and features to those of the Hindoos, that he was not always able, by their appearance, to distinguish the one people from the other; and therefore he seems to have no doubt but that among the Affghans, and other nations in the northern parts of Hindostan, Jewish

(*a*) *Jewish Antiquities*, lib. xi. c. 5.

ad Cajum.

(*g*) 1 Esdras viii. 10, 11.

(*d*) *Basnage*, *ibid*.

(*b*) *Basnage*, *Hist. des Juif.* lib. vi. c. 2.

(*e*) Acts ii. 9.

(*c*) *Philo*,

(*f*) 1 Pet. i. 1.

tribes may be found. Of this opinion was likewise that most illustrious of all oriental scholars—Sir William Jones, who informs us, that the Affghans are said, by the best *Persian* historians, to be descended from the Jews; that they have traditions among themselves of such a descent; and that it is asserted, that their families are distinguished by the names of Jewish tribes, although since their conversion to the *Islam* they studiously conceal their origin.

From 1 Kings
viii. to the end
of 2 Chron.

The Jews, however, with whom Dr Buchanan got acquainted in Malabar—black as well as white, still continue a distinct people, reading the Hebrew Scriptures, and practising all the rites of the law of Moses, which can be practised out of Jerusalem. The black Jews, he seems to think, derive their origin from the ten tribes which were carried away by Shalmaneser king of Assyria, as the others derive theirs from the dispersed Jews of Jerusalem. When he enquired concerning the ten tribes, “they said it was commonly believed among them, that the great body of the Israelites are to be found in Chaldea, and in the countries contiguous to it, being the very places whither they were first carried into captivity; that some few families had migrated into regions more remote, as to *Cochin*, and *Rajapoor*, in India, and to other places yet farther to the East; but that the bulk of the nation, though now much reduced in number, had not to this day removed two thousand miles from Samaria (a).” All those glorious prophecies, therefore, which some by mistake have applied to their thin returns under the Jewish governors sent from Babylon, do certainly relate to a much greater event, even their conversion and final restoration under the kingdom of the Messias.

The prophet Hosea, speaking of the present state of the Jews, gives us this character whereby to distinguish them: (b) “They shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim.” In vain do they boast of that power and authority which they never had but in their own country. The kings and the princes that they talk so much of, are all fictitious and imaginary. From the first time of their transmigration to this very day, they have been a people without any governor, or form of government; and if, in the midst of so many different nations, and under so severe persecutions, they nevertheless have hitherto been preserved, it must be imputed to the secret and wonderful Providence of God, who hath still designs of pity and gracious loving kindness towards them. To this purpose the same prophet assures us, that (c) “the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured or numbered; and in the place where it was said unto them, ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, ye are the sons of the living God: For he shall recover the remnant of his people (says another prophet) (d) that shall be left:—He shall set up an ensign for the nations, and assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth; for (e) behold the days come, saith the Lord, by another of his prophets, that it shall no more be said, the Lord liveth that brought the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt, but the Lord liveth that brought up the children of Israel from the land of the north, and from all the lands, whither he hath driven them. And I will bring them again into the land that I gave unto their fathers;” and when this is done, (f) “I will no more hide my face from them, but (g) will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people. (h) They shall be no more a prey to the heathen: (i) Violence shall be no more heard in their land, wasting, nor destruction within their borders; but they shall call their walls salvation, and their gates praise. (k) Their land shall no more be termed desolate, (l) but

(a) See Buchanan's Christian Researches, &c. and Asiatic Researches, vol. ii. art. 4.

(b) Hosea iii. 4.

(c) Ibid. i. 10.

(d) Isaiah xi. 11, 12.

(e) Jer. xvi. 14, 15.

(f) Ezek. xxxix. 29.

(g) Isaiah lxxv. 19.

(h) Ezek. xxxiv. 28.

(i) Isaiah lx. 18.

(k) Ibid. lxii. 4.

(l) Ezek. xxxvii. 25, &c.

A. M. 3246,
&c. or 4772.
Ant. Chris.
758, &c.
or 639.

they shall dwell in the land that I have given to Jacob my servant, even they and their childrens children for ever; and my servant David (not the son of Jesse, who was dead long before Ezekiel prophesied, but the Messiah, who was to be of the lineage of David, as Kimchi explains it) shall be their prince for ever. Moreover, I will make a covenant of peace, which shall be an everlasting covenant with them; and I will set my sanctuary among them for evermore. My tabernacle shall be with them; yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people."

(a) Now, though it cannot be denied that these, and several other prophecies to the like purpose, do denote a great and glorious restoration to God's people; yet it seems very evident, that scarce any of them can be applied to the return of the Jews from their captivity in Babylon. Long since that time, and almost seventeen hundred years ago, his covenant of peace has been departed from them; "violence has been in their land," which has been laid desolate; their tabernacle and sanctuary have been consumed; they have been a prey to the heathen; and have long ceased to be God's people, and he to be their God: and therefore these prophecies must be understood of some other event, which can only be the general conversion of the Jews to Christianity, and their re-establishment in the Holy Land. For this mystery the apostle has revealed, (b) "that blindness in part hath happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in, and so all Israel shall be saved, as it is written, (c) there shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob. (d) Then shall the Lord set his hand again, a second time, to recover the remnant of his people, and to assemble the outcasts of Israel, from every kindred, and tongue, and nation, and people, that, at (e) the blowing of the great trumpet, they may come from the land of Assyria and Egypt, and may worship the Lord in the holy mount at Jerusalem." When this great event shall happen it is impossible for us to determine; but our business, in the mean time, is to pray, that (f) the salvation of Israel may come out of Zion, that Jacob may rejoice, and Israel may be glad.

(a) *Whitby's Treatise of the true Millennium.*
(d) *Ibid.* xi. 11, &c.

(e) *Ibid.* xxvii. 13.

(b) *Rom.* xi. 25, 26.
(f) *Psal.* xiv. 7.

(c) *Isaiah* lix. 20.

CHAPTER V.

FROM THE DEATH OF JOSIAH TO THE BABYLONISH CAPTIVITY.

THE HISTORY.

AFTER the unhappy death of good Josiah, his son Jehoahaz, † (who was called Shallum) was anointed king; but, as he was far from following his father's example, he was soon †² tumbled down from his throne into a prison, where he ended his days with misery and disgrace in a strange land. For Pharaoh-Necho, upon his return from the expedition against the Babylonians, (wherein he had great success) hearing that Jehoahaz had taken upon him the kingdom of Judah without his consent, sent for him to Riblah in Syria, and on his arrival caused him to be put in chains, and sent prisoner to Egypt *, where he died. He had an elder brother whose name was Eliakim; but Necho, when he came to Jerusalem, changed it into Jehoiakim †³; and having constituted

From 1 Kings viii. to the end of 2 Chron.

† Jehoahaz was not the eldest son of Josiah, as appears from this,—That he was but three and twenty years old when he began to reign, and reigned but three months; after which his brother Jehoiakim, when he was made king, was five and twenty years old, 2 Kings xxiii. 31, 32. For this reason it is said that the people anointed him, because, as he did not come to the crown by right of succession, his title might have otherwise been disputed; for in all disputed cases, and where the kingdom came to be contested, anointing was ever thought to give a preference. At this time, however, the Jews might have some reason to prefer the younger brother, because very probably he was of a more martial spirit, and better qualified to defend their liberties against the king of Egypt. His proper name, it is thought, was Shallum; but our learned Usher supposes that the people, looking upon this as ominous, (because Shallum, king of Israel, reigned but one month), changed it to Jehoahaz, which proved not much more fortunate to him, for he reigned but three; *Patrick's* and *Calmet's* Commentaries.

†² The Scripture nowhere tells us upon what occasion it was that Jehoahaz fell into the king of Egypt's hands, or for what reason it was that he used him so severely; but it is presumable, that to revenge his father's death he might raise an army and engage him in a pitched battle, though he failed in the at-

tempt. For why should he put him in bands, if he voluntarily went and surrendered himself at Riblah? or why be so highly offended at him for accepting of a crown which the people conferred on him? The general opinion therefore is, that he was a man of a bold and daring spirit; and therefore those words in the prophet Ezekiel are applied to him, "Thy mother is a lioness;—she brought up one of her whelps; it became a young lion;—but he was taken in the pit, and he was brought with chains unto the land of Egypt;" for which reason Pharaoh-Necho treated him in this manner, that he might put it out of his power to give him any farther disturbance. *Patrick's* and *Calmet's* Commentaries.

* This the prophet Jeremiah foretold, where he bids the king and the people of Judah, "not to weep for the dead (meaning Josiah), but for him that goeth away; for he shall return no more, nor see his native country. Because, thus saith the Lord concerning Shallum, (which was the original and right name of Jehoahaz) the son of Josiah, king of Judah, who reigned instead of Josiah his father, and who went forth out of this place, he shall not return hither any more." Jer. xxii. 11.

†³ It was an usual thing for conquerors to change the names of the persons they vanquished in war, in testimony of their absolute power over them. Thus we find the king of Babylon changing the name of

A. M. 3394,
&c. or 4803.
Ant. Chris.
610, &c.
or 608.

him king, and put the land to an annual tribute of an hundred talents of silver and a talent of gold, he returned with great triumph into his own kingdom.

Jehoiakim || being thus placed on the throne, went on in his brother's steps to relax all the good order and discipline which his father had instituted, and the people (who never heartily came into that good king's reformation) took this opportunity to follow the bent of their depraved inclinations; whereupon the prophet Jeremiah went first to the king's palace, where he denounced God's judgments against him and his family, and afterwards into the temple, and there spoke to all the people after the same manner. The priests, offended at this freedom, caused him to be seized and brought before the king's council, in hopes of having him put to death; but Ahikam †, who was one of the chief lords thereof, so befriended him, that he got him discharged by the general suffrage, not only of the princes, but also of all the elders of the people that were then present.

But (a) Urijah, * another prophet of the Lord, who in like manner had declared against the iniquity of the prince and people, did not so easily escape: For though he fled into Egypt, when he understood that Jehoiakim had a design against his life; yet this did not hinder the tyrant from pursuing him thither, where, having procured him to be seized, he brought him prisoner to Jerusalem, and there had him executed, and

Mattaniah into Zedekiah when he constituted him king of Judah, 2 Kings xxiv. 17. But our learned Usher has farther remarked, that the king of Egypt gave Eliakim the name of Jehoiakim, thereby to testify that he ascribed his victory over the Babylonians to Jehovah, the God of Israel, by whose excitation (as he pretended, 2 Chron. xxxv. 21, 22.) he undertook the expedition. *Patrick's* and *Calmet's* Commentaries.

|| As to the time when Jehoiakim came to the throne, the difference is very remarkable: For in 2 Chron. xxxvi. 9. it is said, that he was but eight years old, but in 2 Kings xxiv. 8. that he was eighteen when he began to reign; and yet, considering how common a thing it was for kings to make their sons their associates in the kingdom, thereby to secure the possession of it in their family, and prevent all contention among the other brothers, the difference is easily reconciled, by supposing, that when his father had reigned one year, he took him to reign in conjunction with him when he was no more than eight years old. With his father he reigned ten years; so that when his father died he was eighteen years old, and then he began to reign alone, which was no more than three months. The author of the book of Kings makes mention therefore only of the years when he began to reign alone; but the author of the Chronicles speaks of all the time that he reigned both with his father and alone. This is a fair solution; though I cannot see what injury it can do to the authority of the Sacred Text, if we should acknowledge, that there is an error in the transcriber of the book of Chronicles; because two of the most ancient and venerable versions, the Syriac and Arabic, have rendered it in that place, not eight but eighteen, which they were doubtless induced to do by those ancient Hebrew copies from whence they formed their translation. *Patrick's* Commentary and *Pool's* Annotations.

† This Ahikam was the father of Gedaliah, (2 Kings xxv. 22.) who was afterwards made governor of the

land, under the Chaldeans, and the son of Shaphan the scribe, (who was chief minister of state under king Josiah, 2 Kings xxii. 12.) and brother to Gemariah, Jer. xxxvi. 10. Elasah, chap. xxix. 3. and Jaazaniah, Ezek. viii. 11. who were great men in those days, and members likewise of the council with him; where, in conjunction with them, he could not fail of having a powerful interest, which he made use of on this occasion, to deliver the prophet from that mischief which was intended against him. *Prideaux's* Connection, Anno 609.

(a) Jer. xxvi. 20, &c.

* About this time also were living the prophets Habakkuk, Zephaniah, and Nahum, who, being called to the prophetic office in the reign of Josiah, continued (very likely) to this time, because we find them prophesying the same things that Jeremiah did, viz. the destruction and desolation of Judah and Jerusalem, for the many heinous sins that they were guilty of. As to Habakkuk, neither the time in which he lived, nor the parents from whom he was descended, are any where named in Scripture; but his prophesying the coming of the Chaldeans, in the same manner that Jeremiah did, gives us reason to believe that he lived in the same time. Of Zephaniah, it is directly said, chap. i. that he prophesied in the time of Josiah; and in his pedigree (which is also given us) his father's grandfather is called Hezekiah, whom some take for the king of Judah, and consequently reckon this prophet to have been of royal descent. As to Nahum, lastly, it is certain that he prophesied after the captivity of the ten tribes, and before that of the other two which he foretold, chap. i. Though therefore the Jews do generally place him in Manasseh's reign, yet others chuse to refer him to the latter part of Josiah's, as being nearer to the destruction of Nineveh, and of the Assyrian monarchy, to which several prophecies of his do principally relate. *Prideaux's* Connection, Anno 609, and *Howell's* History, in the Notes.

his dead body contemptuously used ; which was no small aggravation to all his other crimes. From 1 Kings viii. to the end of 2 Chron.

He had not been above three years upon the throne, before Nabopollassar, king of Babylon, being now become old and infirm, and perceiving that, upon the late advantage which the king of Egypt had gained against his arms, all Syria and Palestine had revolted from him, took his son Nebuchadnezzar into partnership with him in the empire, and sent him with a strong army into those parts, in order to recover what had been lost,

It was in the fourth year of Jehoiakim, when Nebuchadnezzar, having defeated Necho's army on the banks of the Euphrates, marched into Syria and Palestine, in order to recover these provinces, which he soon did ; and having besieged Jerusalem, took it, and carried away the king, and part of the vessels of the temple along with him, to Babylon. In a short time, however, he released him and restored him to his crown, on condition that he should become tributary to him, which he continued to be for three years ; but in the fourth, he retracted from that subjection, whereupon Nebuchadnezzar came upon him with a fresh invasion.

Upon the first invasion, the Rechabites, who, according to the institution of Jonadab the son of Rechab, their founder, had always abstained from wine, and hitherto only lived in tents, apprehending themselves in more danger in the open country, came to Jerusalem for safety. By these people God intended to convince the Jews of their disobedience to him ; and therefore he ordered his prophet Jeremiah to bring them to an apartment of the temple, and there offer them wine to drink ; which when they refused upon account of its being contrary to their institution, which they never yet had violated, the prophet, (after due commendation * of their obedience) turned it upon the Jews, and reproached them, who were God's peculiar people, for being less observant of his laws than the poor Rechabites, who were not of the stock of Israel, had been of the injunctions of their ancestor.

Before the next invasion, Jeremiah prophesied that Nebuchadnezzar would again come against Judah and Jerusalem ; that he would waste the country, and carry the people captive to Babylon, where they should continue in that condition for the space of seventy years ; with many more calamities and woeful desolations that were ready to fall upon them, if they did not repent. But this was so far from making any saving impression upon them, that it only enraged and exasperated them the more against him, inasmuch, that, for fear of their malice and wrathful indignation, he was † forced to keep himself concealed.

* The prophet's words upon this occasion are these : " Because ye have obeyed the commandments of Jonadab your father, and kept all his precepts, and done according to all that he hath commanded you ; thus saith the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel, Jonadab, the son of Rechab, shall not want a man to stand before me for ever," Jer. xxxv. 18, 19. " To stand before a prince, or to see his face," in Scripture phrase, denotes the honour which accrues from being in his service ; but the Rechabites were neither priests nor Levites. Hitherto they had lived in the fields, separate from towns and villages, and were averse indeed to any employment either in church or state ; but from the time of their captivity (for they were carried along with the two tribes), we find them employed as singers and porters in the service of the temple. To serve in this capacity, there was no necessity for their being of the tribe of Levi ; the declaration of the Divine will, by the mouth of the pro-

phet Jeremiah, was in this case a sufficient vocation. *Calmet's Commentary on Jer. xxv. 19.*

† Jeremiah's words upon this occasion are,—“ I am shut up, I cannot go into the house of the Lord,” chap. xxxvi. 5. But then the question is, what we are to understand by his being shut up ? For, that he was not at that time shut up in prison, is plain from the prince's advising him and Baruch to hide themselves, ver. 19. Junius and Tremellius do therefore suppose three ways of his being shut up, and leave it to our choice which to take. The first is, that the king had forbidden him to go any more into the temple to prophecy such terrible things to the people ; but the prophets of God did not use to observe such prohibitions of their prophetic ministry. The second is, that the chief priests had excommunicated him, and therefore he might not go ; but this, in all likelihood, he would have less regarded, for the same reason. The third is, that God, to provide for

A. M. 3394,
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During his concealment, God commanded him to collect together, and digest into one volume, all the prophecies which he had given him against Israel, against Judah, and against other nations, from the time that he first began to prophecy, (which was in the thirteenth year of Josiah) if haply, by hearing all his judgments summed up together against them, they might be brought to a better sense of their transgressions. To this purpose the prophet employed Baruch †, his disciple and amanuensis, to take a copy †² of them from his mouth; and, when he had so done, ordered him to go up into the temple, on the day of expiation †³, and there read it in the hearing of all the people.

the safety of his prophet, and to punish the obstinacy of the people, would not permit him to go any more among them. This, of the three, seems the most probable; though the phrase may very properly denote no more than the prophet's concealing himself, and keeping at home, for fear of some mischief from the people. *Howel's History in the Notes.*

† Baruch, the son of Neriah, and grandson of Maa-seiah, was of an illustrious birth, and of the tribe of Judah. Seraiah, his brother, had a considerable employment in the court of king Zedekiah, but himself kept close to the person of Jeremiah, and was his most faithful disciple, though his adherence to his master drew upon him several persecutions, and a great deal of bad treatment. After the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, Baruch and his master were permitted to stay in the land of Judea; but when the remains of the people which were left behind, after having slain their governor Gedaliah, were for retiring into Egypt, they compelled Jeremiah and his disciple to go along with them, where the prophet died, and Baruch soon after made his escape to his brethren in Babylon, where, according to the tradition of the rabbins, he likewise died in the twelfth year of the captivity. But of what authority the book which goes under his name is, or by whom it was written, and whether any thing related therein be historically true, or the whole of it a fiction, is altogether uncertain. Grotius, in his commentary upon it, thinks it an entire fiction of some hellenistical Jew, under the name of Baruch: And St Jerom, long before him, (in the preface to his Exposition of Jeremiah) tells us, that the reason why he did not make a comment on this book (though in the edition of the Septuagint it be joined with Jeremiah) was, because it was not deemed canonical among the Hebrews, and contains an epistle which falsely bears the name of Jeremiah. This epistle is annexed to the book, and, in the common division of it, makes the last chapter: But the main subject of the book itself is likewise an epistle, either sent, or feigned to be sent, by king Jehoiakim, and the Jews who were in captivity with him in Babylon, to their brethren the Jews, who were still left in Judah and Jerusalem: Wherein they recommend to their prayers the emperor Nebuchadnezzar and his children, that, under his dominion, they may lead quiet and peaceable lives; wherein they confess their sins, and ask pardon for what is past, take notice of the threats of the prophets which they had so long despised, and acknowledge the righteousness of God in what he had brought upon them; wherein they remind them of the advantages which the Jews had in their knowledge of the law of God, and of true wis-

dom, above all other nations; and thereupon exhort them to reform their manners, and forsake their evil customs, which would be the only means to bring about their deliverance from the captivity under which they groaned. The whole is introduced with an historical preface; wherein it is related, that Baruch, being then at Babylon, did, in the name of the captive king and his people, draw up the same epistle, and afterwards read it to them for their approbation; and that, together with it, they sent a collection of money to the high priest at Jerusalem for the maintenance of the daily sacrifices. This is the substance of the book itself: And in the letter annexed to it, which goes under Jeremiah's name, the vanity of the Babylonish idols and idolatry is set forth at large, and with liveliness enough. Of the whole there are but three copies; one in Greek, and the other two in Syriac, whereof one agreeth with the Greek, though the other very much differs from it; but in what language it was originally written, or whether one of these be not the original, or which of them may be so, it is next to impossible to tell. *Prideaux's Connection*, Anno 595. and *Calmet's Preface sur Baruch*.

†² How Jeremiah could remember all the prophecies that he uttered, for the space of two and twenty years together, we can hardly conceive, unless we allow that he had the particular inspiration of God to bring all things to his remembrance, that he might neither forget nor misrepresent them in his recital to Baruch: For without such a supernatural assistance, what security have we that this part of the Scriptures is the work of the Holy Ghost? *Calmet's Commentary on Jer. xxxvi. 4.*

†³ Some are of opinion, that this was done on the great day of fasting, or solemn expiation, which was observed at the beginning of the civil year, on the tenth day of the month Tizri, which answers to the latter end of our September, and the beginning of October; but the context seems to denote, that it was on the fast day mentioned in the ninth verse to have been proclaimed in the fifth year of Jehoiakim, which must have been a fast extraordinary, and appointed upon some particular occasion of the state, because the law had ordained no such observation on the ninth month: but what that particular occasion was, it is not so well known; though some have imagined, that it was in commemoration of the calamity which had befallen Jerusalem the year before, when Nebuchadnezzar had sent to Babylon part of the vessels of the house of the Lord, and was upon the point of sending away captive the king, and all his princes. *Calmet's Commentary on Jer. xxvi. 4. 9.*

Pursuant to his instructions Baruch went, and in Gemariah's † apartment read the book, first to the people who stood below in the courts, and afterwards to the princes, who were met together in the secretary's chamber; and who thereupon advised him and his master Jeremiah, both †² to keep out of the way until they had known the king's pleasure concerning it. As soon as the king was informed of the book, he sent one of his attendants for it, and commanded him to read it: but he had not gone far, before the king, impatient to hear the judgments denounced against him, snatched it out of his hand, and, notwithstanding the importunity of his nobles to dissuade him, cut it to pieces, and threw it into the fire *, which was upon the hearth, (for it was then the winter season) where it was consumed; and then immediately sent out his officers to apprehend the prophet and his amanuensis, but they had both withdrawn to a place of security, and could not be found.

From 1 Kings
viii. to the end
of 2 Chron.

Upon burning the book, Jeremiah was commanded to make another in the same manner; to have the same prophecies inserted in it, with some (a) farther denunciations against Jehoiakim and his house, which, in a short time, began to take effect. For Nabuchadnezzar, (as we said) having invaded Judea, and laid siege to Jerusalem, soon took it, and put Jehoiakim in chains to carry him to Babylon; but, upon his humiliation, and swearing fealty to him, he again restored him to his kingdom, and left Jerusalem in order to pursue his victories against the Egyptians: But before he did that, he *² caused great numbers of the people to be sent captives to Babylon, and gave particular orders to Ashpenaz, the master of his eunuchs, that out of the children of the royal family, and of the nobility of the land, he should make choice of such as surpassed others in beauty and wit, that when they came to Babylon, they might be made eunuchs too, and attend in his palace. This Aspehnaz accordingly did; and among the children that were carried away captive *³ for this purpose, were Daniel, Hananiah,

† This Gemariah was one of the captains of the temple, whose apartment was near the new gate, whereof he kept guard, and had a certain number of Levites under him, who constantly stood sentinel. For the temple, we must know, was guarded like a king's palace; and as the upper court, which is mentioned in the text, was in all probability the priests' court; so the gate whereof Gemariah had charge, must have been the east gate of that court, which, in the reign of Jehoshaphat, 2 Chron. xx. 5. is called the new court. *Calmet's Commentary.*

†² The advice which the princes of Judah gave upon this occasion is very remarkable, because it reconciles their duty to God, to justice, and to charity, with what they were obliged to, from their prince. Their prince they knew was of an hasty and violent temper; and yet the contents of the book was such, that it would not be safe for him to be ignorant of it; and therefore, being in duty bound to acquaint him with it, they advised Baruch and his master to provide for their own security, until they should see what effect it would have upon the king, whereof they promised, no doubt, to give them intelligence. *Calmet's Commentary.*

* The text tells us, that it was in the ninth month (which answers in part to our month of November) when the king burnt the book. After that the rain began to fall in the month of September, the weather generally grew raw and cold, so that a fire at this time was not unseasonable: The custom however, in this country, was not to have chimneys, as it is among us. The fire was made in the middle of the room,

upon an hearth, or in a stove, and the smoke went out either at the door, or window, or some opening made on purpose in the roof of the house, as we see in some of our college halls, and some kitchens in ancient monasteries, where the chimney is in the midst of the roof, in the form of a cupola, with several openings for the smoke to fly out at. For, that there were formerly no chimneys in the manner we make them now, is plain from the observation, which his annotator makes upon Vitruvius, viz. that, in all his book of architecture, he makes no mention of chimneys, which he questionless would have done, had they been of use in his time. *Calmet's Commentary, and M. Perault sur Vitruv. liv. vi. c. 8.*

(a) Jer. xxxvi. 30, 31.

*² Since the people were thus carried into captivity, the sons of the royal family, and of the nobility of the land, made eunuchs and slaves in the palace of the king of Babylon; the vessels of the temple carried thither, the king made a tributary, and the whole land now brought into vassalage under the Babylonians; from hence we must reckon the beginning of the seventy years captivity foretold by the prophet Jeremiah, chap. xxv. 11. and xxix. 10. and in the fourth year of Jehoiakim must be the first year in that computation. *Prideaux's Connection, Anno 606.*

*³ Some indeed do place their captivity several years later, but it is absolutely inconsistent with what is elsewhere said in Scripture: for, these children, after their carrying away to Babylon, were to be three years under the tuition "of the master of the eunuchs," Dan. i. 5. to be instructed by him in the lan-

A. M. 3394. Mishael, and Azariah. Daniel, upon his arrival in Babylon, was called Belteshazzar, and the other three were named Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, of whom we have several things to say in another place.

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Jehoiakim, after he had lived in subjection to the king of Babylon for three years rebelled against him; and refusing to pay him any more tribute, renewed his confederacy with Necho king of Egypt. Hereupon Nebuchadnezzar *, not being at leisure to come himself to chastise him, sent orders to all his lieutenants and governors of provinces in those parts, to make war against him, which brought upon him inroads and depredations from every quarter; till in the eleventh year of his reign, all parties joined together against him, and having shut him up in Jerusalem, they took him prisoner in a sally which he made upon them, slew him with the sword, and in the completion of the (a) prophet's prediction concerning him, || cast his dead body in the highway, without allowing it the decency of a funeral.

After the death of his father, Jehoiachin, ||² (who is likewise called Coniah and Jeconiah) ascended the throne; but for the little time that he continued thereon, persisting in his father's impieties, he drew upon himself (b) a bitter declaration of God's wrath, which was speedily executed. For in three months after his father's death, Nebuchadnezzar, † coming in person with his royal army to Jerusalem (which was then blocked

guage and learning of the Chaldeans, before they could be admitted into the presence of the king, to stand, and serve before him. But in the second year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign, after his father's death, (which was but the fourth year after his first taking of Jerusalem) Daniel had not only admission and freedom of access to the king, but we find him there interpreting his dream, (Dan. ii.) and immediately thereupon advanced to be the chief of the governors of the wise men, and ruler over all the provinces of Babylon; and less than four years instruction in the language, laws, usages, and learning of the country, can scarce be thought sufficient to qualify him for such a trust, nor could he any sooner be old enough for it, because we may observe, that when he was first carried away from Jerusalem he was but a youth. *Prideaux's* Connection, Anno 528.

* What detained him from going in person against Jerusalem we are not told; only it appears, that in the tenth year of Jehoiakim, he was engaged in an arbitration between the Medes and Lydians, the occasion of which was this.—After the Medes had recovered all the Upper Asia out of the hands of the Scythians, and again extended their borders to the river Halys, which was the common boundary between them and the Lydians, it was not long before there happened a war between these two nations, which was managed for five years together with various success. In the sixth year, intending to make one battle decisive, they engaged each other with their utmost strength; but in the midst of the action, and while the fortune of the day seemed to hang in an equal balance between them, there happened an eclipse, which overspread both the armies with darkness; whereupon they desisted from fighting, and agreed to refer the controversy to the arbitration of two neighbouring princes. The Lydians chose Sienesis, king of Cilicia; and the Medes, Nebuchadnezzar (who, by Herodotus, lib. i. is called Labynetus), king of Babylon, who concluded a peace between

them, on the terms, that Astyages, son of Cyaxares, king of Media, should take to wife Ariana, the daughter of Halyattis, king of the Lydians; of which marriage, within a year after, was born Cyaxares, who is called Darius the Mede in the book of Daniel. *Prideaux's* Connection. Anno 528.

(a) Jer. xxii. 18, 19.

|| In 2 Kings xxiv. 6. we are told expressly, that "Jehoiakim slept with his fathers," and yet it is very certain, that he was neither buried with them, nor died in his bed, but lay above ground unburied, according to the prediction of the prophet, Jer. xxxvi. 30. "exposed in the day to the heat, and in the night to the frost; from whence it appears, that "to sleep with one's father" signifies no more than to die as they did. *Patrick's* Commentary.

||² His succeeding his father in the throne of Judah may seem to disagree with the threat which the prophet denounces against his father, Jer. xxxvi. 30.—"He shall have none to sit upon the throne of David." But as Jehoiachin's reign lasted little more than three months, during which time he was absolutely subject to the Chaldeans, a reign of so short a continuance, and so small authority, may very justly be looked upon as nothing. *Calmet's* Commentary.

(b) Jer. xxii. 24,—30.

† It is very probable that Nebuchadnezzar heard that he had entered into a confederacy with the king of Egypt as his successor did; and therefore sent an army against him, in the very beginning of his reign, to lay siege to Jerusalem, against which he intended to come himself. But the Jews have a conceit, that Nebuchadnezzar's counsellors represented to him how unadvisedly he had acted, in making him king, whose father had been in rebellion against him, and that, upon their representation, he resolved to depose him. "From an ill dog there never comes a good whelp," was the proverb, they say, which the counsellors made use of on this occasion; and to make this more feasible, to the father and son they generally apply that

up by his lieutenants), caused the place to be begirt with a close siege on every side. This so terrified Jehoiachin, that, † taking his mother, his princes, and his chief ministers with him, he went out to Nebuchadnezzar, and delivered himself into his hand; who, though he spared his life, put him in chains, and sent him to Babylon, where he continued in prison until the death of his conqueror. But when Evilmerodach * succeeded to his father's throne, he not only released him from his imprisonment (which had continued for seven and thirty years), but treated him with great humanity and respect, allowing him an honourable maintenance, and giving him the precedence of all other princes in Babylon.

From 1 Kings
viii. to the end
of 2 Chron.

At this time Nebuchadnezzar carried away with him (besides the king and his family) a vast number of other captives (among whom was Ezekiel the prophet), all the mighty men of valour, and all the useful artificers out of Jerusalem, || to the number of ten thousand men, together with all the treasures and †² rich furniture of the temple, and of the royal palace. What he left in the land were only the poorer sort of people, over whom he made Mattaniah, the third son of Josiah, king. Of him he took a solemn oath to be faithful and true in his obedience to the crown of Babylon; and to engage him the more to be so, he changed his name to Zedekiah (which signifies *the justice of the Lord*), intending thereby to put him in mind of the vengeance he was to expect from *the justice of the Lord* his God, if he violated that fidelity which he had in his name sworn unto him.

Zedekiah was but just settled in the throne, and Nebuchadnezzar departed out of Judea and Syria, when (a) several kings of the neighbouring nations, viz. the Ammo-

passage in Ezekiel,—“She took another of her whelps, and made him a young lion, and he went up and down among the lions. He became a young lion, and learned to catch the prey, and devour men.—Then the nations set against him on every side from the provinces: They spread their net over him, and he was taken in their pit,” chap. xix. 6, &c. *Calmet's* and *Patrick's* Commentaries.

† It is very probable that he made this surrender at the advice of the prophet Jeremiah, who gave the same counsel more than once to his successor Zedekiah, Jer. xxi. 9.—xxvii. 17.—xxxviii. 2.

* During his father's indisposition, who fancied himself metamorphosed into an ox, he took upon him the administration of the government; but after seven years, when his father recovered his understanding, so as once more to ascend the throne, Evilmerodach, as some believe, was imprisoned by his father, and in his confinement contracted an acquaintance and intimacy with Jehoiachin; so that, after his father's death, and his full accession to the throne, he released him out of prison, and heaped many favours upon him: And it was by his advice (as the Jews tell us) that Evilmerodach took his father out of the ground after he was dead and buried, cut his body in pieces, and gave them to three hundred ravens, lest he should return from his grave as he had before recovered from his metamorphosis into an ox. *Calmet's* Dictionary under the word *Evilmerodach*.

|| This must be understood of the whole number of the people that were at this time carried captive, which (according to Abarbanel) was thus made up;—Jehoiachin, and all his court and great men, were seven thousand; the craftsmen a thousand; and other considerable men in the country two thousand, which completed the number. Jeremiah indeed computes

them to be little above three thousand that were now carried away; but he reckons only those that were carried from Jerusalem; whereas in 2 Kings xxxiv. 16. there is an account of those who were carried from other cities, and out of the tribe of Benjamin, which were seven thousand; and this reconciles the difference. *Patrick's* Commentary.

†² Nebuchadnezzar carried away the vessels and rich furniture of the temple at three different times. 1st, In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim, when he first took Jerusalem, he carried “part of the vessels of the house of God away into the land of Shinar, and put them into the house of his god,” Dan. i. 2. These were the vessels which his son Belshazzar profaned, Dan. v. 2. and which Cyrus restored to the Jews, (Ezra i. 7.) to be set up again in the temple when rebuilt. 2dly, In the reign of Jehoiachin, he took the city again, and cut in pieces a great part of the vessels of gold which Solomon had made, 2 Kings xxiv. 13. and by some chance or other had escaped his former plunder. 3dly, In the eleventh year of Zedekiah he pillaged the temple once more, when he brake in pieces the pillars of brass, and the bases, and the brazen sea, and took along with them all the vessels of silver and gold that he could find, and carried them to Babylon, 2 Kings xxv. 13, &c. It is somewhat strange, that amongst all this inventory we hear no mention made of the ark of the covenant, which of all other things was held most sacred; but it is very probable that it was burnt, together with the temple, in this last desolation. For what some say of its being hidden by the prophet Jeremiah, in a certain cave in Mount Nebo, is a mere fable. *Patrick's* and *Calmet's* Commentaries; and *Dissert. sur l'Arche d'Alliance*

(a) Jer. xxxvii.

A. M. 3394,
&c. or 4814.
Ant. Chris.
610, &c.
or 597.

nites, the Moabites, the Edomites, the Zidonians, the Tyrians, &c. sent their ambassadors to Jerusalem, to congratulate him upon his accession to the throne, and to propose a league against the king of Babylon, in order to shake off his yoke, and prevent his return into those parts any more. Upon this occasion, Jeremiah, by God's command, made him bonds and yokes, which he sent by the said ambassadors to their respective masters, with this message from God, viz. "that he had given all their countries to the king of Babylon; and therefore their wisest course would be to submit to his yoke, which if they refused to do, both they and their countries should most certainly be destroyed:" but to Zedekiah he went in person, and, having persuaded him to submit to the king of Babylon, and not to give credit to false prophets, who might flatter him with a deliverance from his power, he prevailed with him, for that time, not to enter into the league that was proposed.

He had, before this, (a) under the emblem of two baskets of figs, foretold Zedekiah the restoration which God intended for those that were gone into captivity, and the misery and desolation which should befall them who were still in the land; and now, in pursuance of his prophetic office, he * took the opportunity of the king's sending an embassy to Babylon to direct a letter to the Jews of the captivity, advising them not to be deceived with such prophets *² as made them entertain false hopes of a speedy restoration; that, by the ordination of God, their captivity was to last seventy years; and that the people left at Jerusalem would be of little use to assist them in their deliverance, because God, in a short time, would afflict them with the sword, with famine, and with pestilence, so as to consume the greatest part of them, and scatter the rest over the face of the earth; and therefore he exhorts them to live quietly and peaceably in the country, whither they were carried, without expecting any return until the time which God had appointed.

Upon the receipt of this letter, one Shemaiah, a popular man among the captive Jews at Babylon, took upon him to write to Zephaniah, the second priest, and to all the priests and people of Jerusalem, representing Jeremiah as a madman, and a false pretender to prophecy, and advising them to confine him: which Jeremiah hearing, was commanded by God to send again to the captives of Babylon, to let them know, that he would punish Shemaiah and his posterity very severely, for having deluded them with false prophecies; and, at the same time, (to convince those that were left in Jerusalem) he shewed them, (b) by the emblem of a potter's vessel, that it was in the

(a) Jer. xxiv.

* At what time, and upon what occasion Zedekiah sent this embassy to the king of Babylon, the Sacred History is silent; but it is very presumable that it was at the beginning of his reign, and that as Judea was then tributary to the Chaldeans, the king's policy was to keep up a good understanding with them. Ezekiel however was not as yet possessed of the spirit of prophecy; and for this reason Jeremiah was obliged to take care of the Jews who were gone captives into the land of Babylon, and to send them instructions in what manner they were to behave, viz. "to seek the peace of the city whither they were carried away," Jer. xxix. 7. pursuant to which instruction, we find those in Babylon requiring their brethren at "Jerusalem to pray for the life of Nabuchodonosor king of Babylon, and for the life of Balthasar his son, that their days may be upon earth as the days of heaven:—That they might live under the shadow of Nabuchodonosor, and under the shadow of his son, and find favour in their sight," Baruch i. 11, 12.

*² The two persons mentioned in Scripture, who took upon them to be prophets sent from God, were Ahab the son of Kolaiah, and Zedekiah the son of Maaseiah, two of the captivity among the Jews at Babylon; who feeding the people with false promises of a speedy restoration, hindered them from making any settlements in the places assigned for their habitation: but, as the prophet Jeremiah denounced their sudden and fearful destruction, Nebuchadnezzar, understanding that they disturbed the people by their vain prophecies, caused them both to be seized, and roasted to death in the fire. The later Jews say, that these two men were the two elders who would have corrupted Susanna, and that Nebuchadnezzar commanded them to be burnt for this reason: but the whole foundation of this conceit is, that Jeremiah (chap. xxix. 23. where he speaks of these men) says, "that they committed villany in Israel, and adultery with their neighbours wives;" from whence they conjecture all the rest. *Prideaux's Connection*, Anno 597.

(b) Jer. xviii.

Almighty's power to destroy what nation or people he pleased. But all this availed nothing. They still resolved to go on in their wicked ways: And to avenge themselves of the prophet, who gave them some disturbance therein, they abused him with words and blows, and at length put him in the stocks.

From 1 Kings
viii. to the end
of 2 Chron.

It was no small comfort to him, however, under all his afflictions, to find that Ezekiel, who, much about this time, was called to the prophetic office, prophesied the same things at Babylon that he did at Jerusalem. At Jerusalem, Jeremiah (*a*) foretold the Divine judgments which were to be executed upon Chaldea and Babylon by the Medes and Persians, which he wrote in a book and (*b*) delivered it to Seraiah, || who was then going to Babylon upon an embassy, with instructions to read the contents of it to his captive brethren upon the banks of the river Euphrates; and when he had made an end of reading, to tie a stone to it, and * throw it into the river, thereby to denote, that as it would naturally sink, so should the Babylonish empire be totally destroyed, and never rise any more.

At Babylon, Ezekiel, by several types and prophetic revelations, foretold the taking of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans; Zedekiah's flight from the city by night; the putting out of his eyes; his imprisonment and death at Babylon; the carrying away the remainder of the Jews into captivity; the desolation of their country, and the many and great calamities which should befall them for their iniquities. But to those of the captivity, who, avoiding these iniquities, did endeavour to keep themselves steady and faithful in God's service, God, by the mouth of his prophet, promised to become a sanctuary in a strange country, and to bring them back again into the land of Israel, where they should flourish in peace and righteousness, and once more (*c*) "become his people, and he their God."

Thus did these two great prophets visit the people which were still remaining in Jerusalem with several warnings; endeavouring, both by significant emblems and direct predictions, to reclaim them. But when they still persisted in their obstinacy and disobedience, God at length brought upon them the calamities which he had so often foretold and so severely threatened.

Before we come to the destruction of Jerusalem, however, there is a memo-

(*a*) Jer. i. and li.

(*b*) Chap. li. 59. 64.

|| The words in the text, according to our translation, are,—“The word which Jeremiah the prophet commanded Seraiah, the son of Neriah, &c. when he went with Zedekiah, the king of Judah, into Babylon, in the fourth year of his reign, and this Seraiah was a quiet prince,” Jer. li. 59. and from hence some Hebrew interpreters infer, that Zedekiah went to Babylon in the fourth year of his reign, to make his court, and cultivate the good graces of his patron and paramount Nebuchadnezzar. But this opinion, though followed by several, has no foundation in any other part of Scripture, and the passage now before us may, according to the original, be very properly rendered in this wise:—“The word which Jeremiah commanded Seraiah, when he went to Babylon upon an embassy from Zedekiah.” The chief business of this embassy was to request of Nebuchadnezzar a restitution of the sacred vessels of the temple which he had taken away, when he carried Jehoiakim captive into Babylon. Our translation however is not at all significant in this place, when it styles this Seraiah a *quiet prince*. The Septuagint have very properly rendered the words ἀρχων δώρων, *the prince of the presents*, which

some apply to the presents which king Zedekiah made to the temple, and others, to the things he daily supplied for sacrifices; but the most natural sense in this place is, that he was charged with the presents and tribute which Zedekiah was obliged to send to Nebuchadnezzar; that his business was to present them to the emperor, and, upon that occasion, to solicit the restoration of the sacred vessels; upon which account, the Vulgate has rendered the words, *princeps prophetiæ*, the chief person in the embassy, who, at the time of audience, was to make a speech to the emperor in his prince's name. *Calmet's Commentary*.

* We have an emblematical action of the like kind described in the book of the Revelation of St John,—“And a mighty angel took up a stone, like a great mill-stone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus, with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all,” chap. xviii. 21. where the word Babylon is taken in an analogical sense, because the destruction of that great city and empire (as we shall see hereafter) was so remarkable, as to afford a comparison for any other great and opulent state brought to ruin and desolation.

(*c*) Ezek. xi. 20.

A. M. 3394, rable transaction * which preceded it, viz. the siege of Bethulia, and its deliverance
&c. or 4814. by the courage and dexterity of a woman, which must † not be entirely omitted.
Ant. Chris. The author of the book of Judith *² relates, that Nabuchodonosor, king of Assyria,
610, &c.
or 597.

* It is a great dispute among the learned, whether this history of Judith was transacted before or after the Babylonish captivity. Those who maintain the latter opinion, found a great deal upon the words of the history itself, wherein the author (according to the Greek version, chap. iv. 3.) expressly tells us, that "the Israelites were newly returned from captivity, and all the people of Judea were lately gathered together, and the vessels, and the altar, and the house were sanctified after their profanation:" And wherein it is farther affirmed, that they "were led captives into a land that was not theirs, that the temple of their God was cast to the ground, and their cities taken by the enemies; but now are they come up from the places where they were scattered, and have possessed Jerusalem," chap. v. 18, 19.—It is vain, say they, to endeavour to correct the sense of these passages; the bare reading of them, and the first impression they make upon the mind, naturally leads one to say, that this history was not transacted till after the return from the captivity, which, in a great measure, is confirmed by the opinion of almost all the ancients, and a great many of the moderns; but then they widely disagree in their computations of the period of time when this remarkable event happened. For some place it under Cambyses, the son of Cyrus; others under Xerxes; others under Darius; and others again under Antiochus Epiphanes, in the time of the Maccabees; which last opinion is the most tenable, if we will but allow, that a feast was instituted in commemoration of it, as we read in the Vulgate, but in none of the other translations. Those who maintain, that this transaction happened before the captivity, are, in like manner, divided: For some place it under Manasseh, and others under Zedekiah. Those who contend for Zedekiah's reign, make the Nabuchodonosor in the book of Judith, and the Nebuchadnezzar in the 2d of Kings, the same person; and as it is positively said in the 2d chapter of Judith, that he put his general Holofernes on this expedition, in the first month of the eighteenth year of his reign, which was the ninth of Zedekiah king of Judah, Holofernes's death and the siege of Jerusalem happened, they say, in the same year; only it must be supposed, that the attempt against Bethulia was in the beginning of the year, and the siege of Jerusalem at the end of it. The captivity therefore, from which the Jews are said to have newly returned, must be that in Jehoiakim's time, for that in Zedekiah's continued seventy years, before which Nebuchadnezzar had quite subdued Arphaxad, king of the Medes, and demolished Ecbatana. And as for the Bethulians enjoying peace during the life of Judith, it may be supposed that Nebuchadnezzar, being employed two years in the siege of Jerusalem, might spend some years in reducing other parts of the country; and seeing Bethulia was a place naturally strong, and situated among the moun-

tains, he might be unwilling to foil his army before it, and (especially considering the ill success of his general) to make any fresh attempt upon it until he had subdued all the rest. Those, again, who contend for Manasseh's reign, make the Nabuchodonosor in Judith to be the same with Saosduchinus in Ptolemy, and Arphaxad the same with Phraortes, mentioned by Herodotus; and that, as these two princes made war with one another, wherein Phraortes was vanquished and perished with his army, all the other things recorded of Saosduchinus and his general might happen without inconsistency. For the captivity there mentioned might be that from whence Manasseh, with some of his subjects, had lately returned, when the temple which had been profaned was purified again, and the service of the sanctuary restored to its ancient dignity, 2 Chron. xxxiii. 1, &c. This is a short state of the several opinions concerning the date of this transaction; and the last of these, in our judgment, seems to be best founded. *Prideaux's* Connect. an. 665. *Calmet's* Preface à le Livre de Jud.

† For though the Jews and ancient Christians did not receive this book of Judith into their canon of Scripture, yet they always looked upon it as a true history; and accordingly Clement, in his epistle to the Corinthians, has cited it, as well as the author of the apostolic constitutions which go under his name; and, as St Athanasius, or the writer of the Synopsis that is ascribed to him, gives a summary account of it, even as he does of other sacred books, from his example we may be permitted to justify the short abridgement which we have made of it in our History of the Holy Bible. *Calmet's* Dictionary under the word *Judith*.

*² Who this author was it nowhere appears. St Jerom seems to think that Judith wrote it herself, but produces no good authority for his opinion. Others will have it, that the high priest Joakim, mentioned in this book, was the author of it; but this is equally a bare conjecture; nor is there much more certainty in those who, supposing the history to have happened in the time of Cambyses, ascribe it to Joshua the son of Josedek, who was high priest at that time. But whoever the author was, he seems to be posterior to the facts which he relates, because he speaks of the festival instituted in memory of Judith's victory, as still continued in his time, Judith xvi. 20. The book was originally written in the Chaldee language, which is not now extant; but from thence St Jerom formed the translation, (which we now have in the vulgar Latin edition of the Bible), not rendering it word for word (as himself tells us in his preface to the history), but repairing the corruptions of the various readings, and giving us, according to the best of his judgment, the true and entire sense of the original. Besides this translation of St Jerom's, there are two others, one in Greek and the other in Syriac. That which

† in the twelfth year of his reign, fought a great battle in the plains of Ragau †², with Arphaxad †³ king of Media, wherein he not only utterly defeated and slew him, but made himself master of several of his cities, and (among others) of Ecbatana *, (the royal seat of the Median empire), which he miserably defaced; and afterwards returned in great triumph to Nineveh: That, some time after, enquiring of his officers, nobles, and counsellors, what tributary countries had not gone with them to the war, (for he had summoned them all to attend him), and finding that none of the western provinces had paid that regard to his commands, he made a decree that Holofernes *², the chief

is in Greek is attributed to Theodotion, who lived in the time of Commodus, who was made emperor of Rome in the year of Christ 180. But the version was much ancients; for Clemens Romanus, as we said, in his epistle to the Corinthians (which was wrote near 126 years before) has a quotation from it. The Syriac translation was made from the Greek, and so was also the English, which we at present have among the Apocryphal writings in our Bible. And of all these three last versions, it may be observed, that there are several particulars in them which are not in St Jerom's, and which seem to be those various readings which he professes to have cut off, as vicious corruptions of the text: so that, in this respect, St Jerom's translation ought to have the preference, whenever there is any remarkable difference between them. *Prideaux's Connection*, Anno 655, and *Calmet's Disert. sur le livre de Judith*.

† This Nabuchodonosor is the same prince whom Herodotus calls Saosduchinus, who, after the death of Esarhaddon, (the same who took the advantage of Masessimordacus's dying without issue, and united the kingdom of Babylon to that of Assyria) succeeded to his acquisitions; and the reason why the author of this book of Judith, who apparently wrote either in Babylon or some other part of Chaldaea, calls him Nabuchodonosor, is, because this was the common name (as Pharaoh was in Egypt) of the kings of that country. *Calmet's Commentary on Judith*, and *Prideaux's Connection*.

†² The plains of Ragau are very probably those which lie about Rages, a town of Media, standing upon the mountains of Ecbatana, and distant about a small day's journey from that city. *Calmet's Dictionary*.

†³ Both our learned *Prideaux* and primate *Usher* are of opinion, that this Arphaxad was the person whom profane historians call Dejoces, the first king of the Medes, and founder of Ecbatana; but the account which the book of Judith gives of Arphaxad, and of the circumstances of his death, seems to be more applicable to what Herodotus relates of Phraortes, his son and successor; for as Arphaxad had many nations under his dominion, and fell in battle against the king of Assyria, Judith i. 6. 15. so Herodotus (lib. i.) tells us of Phraortes, "That, having subdued the Persians, and made them part of his empire, he soon overcame the rest of the people of the Upper Asia, (i. e. all that lay north of Mount Taurus, to the river Halys) passing from nation to nation, and always attended with victory; until, coming with an army against the Assyrians, with an intent to besiege

Nineveh their capital, he was vanquished, and slain, in the two and twentieth year of his reign. Dejoces indeed is said by Herodotus to have been the first founder of Ecbatana; but as the undertaking was very great, it is not improbable, that he left enough to his successor, Phraortes, to complete: So that all the works which the author of Judith ascribes to Arphaxad (chap. i.) might be his." *Calmet's Commentary and Dictionary*, and *Prideaux's Connection*, Anno 635.

* This city, Herodotus says expressly, was built by Dejoces, the first king of the Medes; but that author is wrong in ascribing the honour of the whole work to him, which his son Phraortes, at least, finished and beautified to such a degree, that, though the Scripture is silent, profane authors have given us a very advantageous account of it. The city, according to them, was situate in a spacious eminence, and into it Dejoces had brought together the whole nations of the Medes, who never before had lived in any thing but caves and huts, dispersed up and down in the country, which great concourse of people made it very large and populous. It was encompassed with seven walls at equal distances from each other. The first was the lowest, and equal in circumference with those of Athens, i. e. according to Thucydides, lib. 2. an hundred and seventy eight furlongs. The rest rose gradually, and overlooked each other about the height of a battlement. The battlements were of different colours. The first was white, the second black, the third red, the fourth blue, the fifth of a deep red, the sixth of a silver, and the seventh of a gold colour; and for this reason, as Bochart has observed, this city was usually called by the ancients *Agbata*, which in the Arabian language signifies a *thing of different and distinct colours*. The royal palace and treasury stood within the seventh wall; and the palace alone (according to Polybius, lib. 10.) was seven furlongs round, and built with all the cost and skill that a stately edifice did require; for some of its beams are said to have been of silver, and the rest of cedar, which were strengthened with plates of gold. *Calmet's Commentary and Dictionary* under the word, and *Wells's Geography of the Old Testament*, vol. 3.

*² Some annotators are of opinion, that the word Holofernes is of Persian extract, in the same manner as Tisaphernes, Intaphernes, &c. But others imagine, that this general was a native either of Pontus or Cappadocia. Polybius makes mention of one of that name, who, having conquered Cappadocia, soon lost it again, because he was for changing the ancient customs of the country, and introducing drunkenness,

A. M. 3394.
&c. or 4814.
Ant. Chris.
610, &c.
or 597.

captain of his army, should not fail the next year to chastise their disobedience : That, pursuant to this decree, this general took the field with a vast army †; and having wasted and destroyed several other nations, at length came into Judea, where he laid siege to Bethulia †², a strong town in the tribe of Simeon, and, by cutting off its water, reduced it to such extremity, that through the people's importunity, Ozias the governor had promised to surrender the place, unless it was relieved in five days : That Judith, a widow lady of an ample fortune, but * of great virtue and piety withal, sent for the governor and principal men of the city, to let them know that God, by her hand, would find out an expedient to deliver them ; but in what manner this was to be effected she desired them not to enquire : That having addressed herself to God by prayer for success, and being not insensible of her own beauty, (for she was extremely handsome as well as virtuous), she adorned herself in all her rich attire, and, attended only with one maid †³, left Bethuliah, and went directly to the Assyrian camp : That being stopped by the out-guard, and carried before the general, he received her with all the civility and respect that her appearance seemed to demand ; and having understood that the design of her leaving her countrymen was both to escape the destruction which she foresaw was coming upon them, and to inform him in what situation their affairs were, and how he might become master of the place without the loss of one man, he not only promised her his protection, but appointed her and her maid an apartment proper for them ; for he was already enamoured with her wit and beauty : That having thus far succeeded very prosperously, she requested of him, that as she was a strict observer of the religion of her country, she might be permitted to eat separately †⁴ such provisions

together with feasts and songs to Bacchus ; whereupon Casauban conjectures, that this was the same Holofernes that commanded Nabuchodonosor's forces, as it must be owned, that his riot and debauchery, as well as the rapidity of his conquests, makes him not unlike him. Vid. *Polyph.* apud Athen. lib. 10. c. 11. and *Casaub.* in Athen.

† The author of Judith's history has thus described it :—"Holofernes mustered the chosen men for the battle, as his lord had commanded him, unto an hundred and twenty thousand, and twelve thousand archers on horseback.—A great multitude of sundry countries went with them, like locusts, and like the sand of the earth ; for the multitude was without number." Judith ii. 15. 20.

†² Our modern travellers to the Holy Land do almost unanimously agree, that Bethulia is situate in the tribe of Zebulun, about a league from Tiberias towards the west, where they pretend that some marks of Holofernes's camp are still to be seen : but some great men are apt to suspect the report of these travellers, who are too much accustomed to take up with the traditions of the country, though there is not always the greatest certainty in them. This however is incontestible, that both Judith and her husband were of the tribe of Simeon, Judith viii. 1. and ix. 2. and for what purpose they should remove to so great a distance from their own inheritance, and settle in a different tribe, we cannot see. Since therefore the Scripture takes notice of a place in the tribes of Simeon, named Bethul, or Bethuel, Joshua xix. 4. a place dependant on Gaza of the Philistines, and famous for its temples, which were very remarkable, both for their antiquity and fine structure, (from whence, not unlikely, it had its name of Bethul, or

the House of the Lord) there is much more reason to conclude, that this was the place, since the other, which travellers talk of in the tribe of Zebulun, must be of too modern a date to be the city intended here, because we find neither Joshua, nor Josephus, nor Eusebius, nor St Jerom, making any mention of it. *Calmet's* Dissertation, and Commentary, sur le livre de Judith.

* The character which the historian gives her with respect to this is,—“That there was none who gave her an ill word, for she feared the Lord greatly.” Judith viii. 8. which is certainly an high commendation, considering how tender and delicate a thing the reputation of a young and beautiful widow is, according as St Jerom has elegantly expressed his remark upon it :—"Tenera res in fœminis fama pudicitiae ; et, quasi flos pulcherrimus, cito ad levem marcescit auram, levique flatu corrumpitur ; maxime ubi ætas consentit ad vitium, et maritalis deest autoritas, cuius umbra tutamen uxoris est" *Hieron.* ad Salvianum.

†³ The word, in ancient translations, is *Abra*, which signifies a *companion* or *maid of honour*, (such as ladies of the first condition had) rather than a servant ; for the same word in the Septuagint is applied to the women that attended both Pharaoh's daughter, Exod. xi. 5. and queen Esther, chap. iv. 4.

†⁴ There was no law of God that prohibited the Jews from eating several things that the Gentiles made use of. Bread, wine, and fruits, were allowed them in common with other people ; but either some tradition then prevailing among the Jews, or some religious vow that Judith might have bound herself under, the fear of giving scandal to her countrymen when she returned, or the prayers and pagan invocations which were made over the meat that was ser-

as she had brought with her; and without any molestation to have leave to go out of the camp at night, or before it was day, in order to † perform her devotions, which accordingly was readily granted her: That having lived in this manner for three days, on the fourth, Holofernes invited her to a splendid entertainment, where she appeared in her choicest ornaments of dress; and the general, in hopes of enjoying the beautiful stranger that night, gave a loose to mirth, and drank more plentifully than ever he was known to do: That in the evening, all the company being dismissed except Judith, who was left alone with the general intoxicated with liquor, and now fallen fast asleep upon the bed, she thought this a proper opportunity to put her design in execution; and therefore, approaching the place where he lay, and taking down his scymitar which hung by him, she first prayed to God to strengthen her in the enterprise, and then, at two strokes, severed his head from his body, which she gave to her maid (who by her order was waiting †² at her tent-door) to put in the bag wherein her provisions were brought: That having thus accomplished their design, they passed through the camp unobserved, and made the best of their way to Bethulia; where Judith, acquainting the governor and elders of the city with what she had done, and in testimony thereof producing the head of Holofernes, advised them to hang it out upon the walls as soon as the morning appeared, and then every one to arm, and sally out of the gates, as if they meant to attack the enemy, but in reality only to give them an alarm, that thereupon they might have recourse to their general (as she supposed they would), and so come to know what fate had befallen him: That upon the Bethulians appearing in arms, the out-guards gave notice to their officers, and the officers sent to their general; but when they understood that their general was dead, his head gone, and nothing left behind but a senseless trunk wallowing in blood, such a general consternation overspread the camp, that, instead of preparing themselves to fight, the Assyrians threw away their arms and fled; while the Bethulians, and other neighbouring people (to whom Ozias had sent intelligence of this their disaster) attacked them in small parties from several quarters; and having slain a considerable number of them, greatly enriched †³ themselves with their spoils. That a deputation of the elders from Jerusalem, with their chief priest accompanying them, came to Bethulia to compliment Judith upon this her great achievement, with whom she repaired to the temple at Je-

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ved up to Holofernes; some of these reasons, I say, very likely, hindered her from accepting the offer which the general made, of provisions from his table, and inclined her to desire to eat alone: a restraint, which we find Daniel putting himself under, in the court of Nebuchadnezzar, chap. i. 8. and Tobit, in that of Shalmaneser, chap. i. 10, &c. where he says of himself, that—"when all my brethren, and those that were of my kindred, did eat of the bread of the Gentiles, I kept myself from eating, because I remembered God with all my heart." *Calmet's Commentary.*

† As prayer, no doubt, is best performed in places of retirement, and the hurry of a camp must needs be inconvenient for religious offices, Judith, who professed herself a woman of strict piety, had a good pretence to request of the general a liberty to retire out of the camp, (when she thought proper, and without any questions asked her) to perform her devotions, which she foresaw would be a means to favour her escape, after she had executed the design she came about. For it was on this precaution, rather than any obligation, either from the law, or from custom, that this devotion of her praying without the camp

was founded. *Calmet's Commentary.*

†² Viz. To go along with her out of the camp to prayers, as she had done the nights before: for it does not appear from the whole history, that Judith had communicated her design to her woman, but rather, that she took upon herself the risk of the whole affair, which could not be conducted with too much secrecy and prudence. *Calmet's Commentary.*

†³ So great was the number of these, that the text tells us, the Bethulians were thirty days in gathering them, chap. xv. 11. For, considering the largeness of the camp of the Assyrians, and the several detachments they might have, some on the mountains, and others on the plains; the many valuable things which might be hid, or thrown aside in their flight, and the much time it would cost the Bethulians to search diligently, and collect them all, and to provide carriages to bring them home to the city, there to be distributed equally among the people, and according to the prescription of the law, Numb. xxxi. 27. considering all this, I say, thirty days may not be thought an unreasonable space, though, it must be owned, that the Syriac version reads it only three. *Calmet's Commentary.*

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Jerusalem; where public thanks were given, and burnt sacrifices offered to God, for this signal victory; and Judith's oblation *, upon this occasion, was the plunder of Holofernes's tent, with all his rich equipage which the soldiers had presented her with: And, lastly, that after these public rejoicings †, she went back to Bethulia again, where she lived in great splendour and renown, and after a good old age died, and was buried with her husband Manasseh, much beloved, and much lamented by the people. But to look back to the affairs of Judea.

In the seventh year of his reign, Zedekiah, being grown impatient of the Babylonish yoke, had sent his ambassadors, and made a confederacy with Pharaoh Hophra king of Egypt; which, when Nebuchadnezzar understood, he drew together a great army out of all the nations that were under his dominion, and in a short time marched towards Judea, to punish him for his perfidy and rebellion. His victorious army soon over-ran the country; and having taken most of the cities, in the ninth year of Zedekiah's reign, the tenth month of the year, and the tenth day of the month, it came before Jerusalem and blocked it close up on every side; so that, in a short time, the famine began to prevail: and in memory of this, the Jews have ever since observed the tenth day of Tebeth (the month when this happened) as a day of solemn fasting and humiliation even to this time.

On that very day of the month, when the siege of Jerusalem began, Ezekiel, then a captive in Chaldea, had it revealed to him by the type of a boiling pot, what a dismal destruction should be brought upon that city; and, in the beginning of the next year, Jeremiah was ordered to declare to the king, that the Babylonians, who were then besieging the town, would certainly take it, and burn it with fire; make him prisoner, and carry him to Babylon, where he should die: which provoked Zedekiah to such a degree, that he ordered him to be clapped up close in prison.

As Nebuchadnezzar's army was approaching Jerusalem, Zedekiah and his people, in dread of what might follow, made a shew of returning unto the Lord their God. They entered into a solemn covenant thenceforward to serve him only, and to obey his laws; and, in pursuance of that, agreed to proclaim a manumission, or liberty to all Hebrew servants of either sex, according to what the law ‡² enjoined; but upon the

* Nothing is more common, both in sacred and profane history, than to meet with several kinds of spoils taken in wars dedicated to God, in acknowledgment of his goodness, and in memory of the victory, which, by his blessing and assistance, was then obtained. *Calmet's Commentary.*

† The joy which the people of Jerusalem expressed upon Judith's entry is thus related:—"Then all the women of Israel ran together to see her, and blessed her, and made a dance among them for her; and she took branches in her hand, and gave also to the women that were with her, and they put a garland of olive upon her and on her maid that was with her, and she went before all the people in the dance, leading the women, and all the men of Israel followed with garlands, and with songs in their mouths." Judith xv. 12, 13.

‡² The words of the law are these:—"If thy brother, an Hebrew man or an Hebrew woman, be sold unto thee, and serve thee six years, then in the seventh year thou shalt let him go free from thee; and when thou sendest him out free from thee thou shalt not let him go away empty; thou shalt furnish him liberally out of thy flock, and out of thy floor, and out of thy wine-press; of that wherewith the Lord hath blessed thee thou shalt give unto him: And thou shalt

remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt, and the Lord thy God redeemed thee.—It shall not seem hard unto thee when thou sendest him away free from thee; for he hath been worth a double hired servant to thee, in serving thee six years, and the Lord thy God shall bless thee in all that thou doest," Deut. xv. 12, &c. Now, for the better understanding of this, we must observe, that there were two periods of time wherein this release of Jewish bond-slaves was enjoyed, the year of jubilee, which was every fiftieth, and the Sabbatical year, which was every seventh year. The Sabbatical year is what is here intended: It now happened in the eighth year of Zedekiah's reign; but (as Prideaux in his preface remarks) had not been observed for above 360 years before; for which reason the Jews, being now in a state of compunction, were for restoring it to its primitive institution; but upon the removal of their fears, by the withdrawing of Nebuchadnezzar's forces, they repented of their good intentions, and recalled their servants to their slavery again. Why the observation of such a year in seven was enjoined the reasons are pretty obvious: For, besides the commemoration of the Israelites release from the Egyptian bondage which the text specifies, the general release of servants, and the restoration of lands and tenements to

coming of Hophra king of Egypt to the relief of Jerusalem, and Nebuchadnezzar's raising the siege to meet him, and give him battle, the Jews were generally of opinion, that the Chaldeans were gone for good and all, and thereupon repented of their covenant of reformation, and caused every man his servant, and every man his handmaid, to return to their servitude: which base and inhuman prevarication so provoked God, that he ordered his prophet to proclaim liberty to the sword, and to the famine, and to the pestilence, to execute his wrath upon them, and their king, and their princes, and all Judah and Jerusalem, to their utter destruction.

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Jeremiah, indeed, in all the answers which he returned to the king, (who, upon the departure of the Chaldeans sent frequently to consult him) was always positive, that the Egyptians, whom he depended upon, would certainly deceive him; that their army would return without giving him any assistance; and that the Chaldeans would thereupon renew the siege, take the city, and burn it with fire. During their absence, however, he thought it no improper time to endeavour to avoid the approaching siege by retiring to Anathoth, his native place; but as he was passing the gate of the city which led that way, the captain of the guard seized him as a deserter, and brought him before the princes, who, in much rage, fell upon him, and beat him, and then committed him to the common jail, where he continued for many days.

In the mean time the Egyptians, not daring to engage the Chaldean army, retired before them into their own country, leaving Zedekiah and his people, with their unequal strength, to contend with Nebuchadnezzar, who now returned more exasperated than ever to re-invest the city of Jerusalem. Nor had he been long before it, ere the king sent messengers to Jeremiah to enquire of him, then in prison, concerning the fate of the present war: but his constant answer was,—“That God, being highly provoked against him and his people for their manifold iniquities, would fight against the city, and smite it; that both king and people should be delivered into the hands of the king of Babylon; that those who continued in the city during the siege should perish by the pestilence, by the famine, and by the sword; but that those who endeavoured to escape, though they fell into the hands of the Chaldeans, would have their lives preserved:” At which several of the princes, and chief commanders, being very much offended, pressed the king against him, as one who, by his speeches, discouraged the soldiers and people, and was enough indeed to occasion a defection.

In this conjuncture of affairs, the king was obliged to deliver him into their hands; and they, with unrelenting cruelty, cast him into a nasty dungeon †, where inevitably he must have perished, had not Ebed-melech †², one of the king's eunuchs, interceded

their first owners, which were then to be transacted, were to hinder the rich from oppressing the needy, and reducing them to perpetual slavery; that debts should not be too much multiplied, nor the poor, consequently, entirely ruined; but that a liberty of people's persons, an equality of their fortunes, and the order and distinction of their tribes and families (as far as it was possible) might be preserved: And it was something like this that Lycurgus established among the Lacedemonians, in his instituting an equality among persons, banishing slavery, and preventing (as far as he could) any one's becoming too powerful or too rich. [But how very inferior the regulations of the Spartan legislator for these purposes, were to those of Moses, the reader will find clearly proved in Dr Graves's Lectures on the Pentateuch.] *Bedford's Scripture Chronology*, lib. iv. c. 4. and *Calmet's Dictionary* under the word *Sabbath*.

† Some think that, when he was in this dismal place, he made those mournful meditations which are

set down in the third chapter of the Lamentations. “They have cut off my life in the dungeon, and cast a stone upon me.—I called upon thy name, O Lord, out of the low dungeon, and thou hast heard my voice, &c.” ver. 53. 55. 56. *Lowth's Commentary* on Jer. xxxviii.

†² This charitable intercessor for the prophet in his distress, is, in the text, said to have been an Ethiopian: accordingly Huetius (in his *Treatise de Navigatione Solomonis*, cap. 7.) observes from Josephus, that Solomon, in his voyage to Tarshish, (1 Kings x. 22.) amongst other merchandise brought slaves from Ethiopia, which was likewise the practice of the Greeks and Romans in after ages, as he there proves by several testimonies: And such an one he supposes this Ebed-melech to have been originally, though afterwards he was promoted to be an eunuch, or chief officer of the king's house. *Lowth's Commentary* on Jer. xxxviii.

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with his master to have him released from thence, and sent back to his former prison; for which favour, the prophet assured him from God, that he should not perish at the sacking of the city.

As the city began to be pressed more by the siege, the king desired a private conference with Jeremiah, who accordingly was sent for to an apartment of the temple; but the prophet could give no other answer to his questions than what he had done before; only he advised him to surrender to the enemy, as the best expedient to save both himself and the city. The king, though urged by the prophet, could by no means bring himself to think of that. At his breaking off the discourse, however, he obliged him to secrecy, though he did not forget to remand him to prison: And this is the last interview that the prophet had with the king.

In the mean time, the siege began to draw towards a conclusion. The people within the walls, through the scarcity of provisions, were reduced to the last necessity, even (a) to feed on one another; and those without had now finished their works, and provided all things for a general assault; when, in the eleventh year of king Zedekiah, and on the ninth day of the fourth month of that year, the city was taken by storm about midnight, and every place filled with blood and slaughter. Through the favour of the night, Zedekiah and his friends, * endeavoured to make their escape towards the wilderness; but he had not gone far before he was taken and carried to Nebuchadnezzar, who was then at Riblah †, where, after some severe reproaches *², he first caused his sons, and the princes of Judah taken with him, to be slain before his face, and then commanded his eyes || to be put out, and himself to be bound in fetters of brass, to be

(a) Lament. iv. 4, 5. and Ezek. v. 10.

* It is a hard matter to conceive how the besieged could make their escape, seeing that the Chaldeans had begirt the city round about. Josephus indeed gives us this account:—"That as the city was taken about midnight, the captains, with the rest of the soldiers, went directly into the temple; which king Zedekiah perceiving, he took his wives, children, commanders, and friends, and they slept all away together, by a narrow passage towards the wilderness." But then what this narrow passage was is still the question. The Jews indeed think, that there was a subterraneous passage from the palace to the plains of Jericho, and that the king, and his courtiers, might endeavour to make their escape that way. Dion, it is true, tells us, lib. lxvi. that in the last siege of Jerusalem, the Jews had covert ways, which went under the walls of the city, to a considerable distance into the country, out of which they were wont to sally, and fall upon the Romans that were straggling from their camp: But since neither Josephus, nor the sacred historian, takes notice of any such subterraneous conduit at this siege, we may suppose, that the Chaldeans having made a breach in the wall, the besieged got away privately between the wall and the outworks in a passage which the enemy did not suspect. The words in the second book of Kings are:—"They went by the way of the gate, between the two walls, which is by the king's garden," chap. xxv. 4. which in Jeremiah are thus expressed:—"They went by the way of the king's garden, by the gate between the two walls:" So that as the king's garden faced the country, very likely there was some very private and imperceptible gate, through which they might attempt to escape, and the besiegers perhaps

might not keep so strict a watch at that part of the town (especially in the hurry of storming it), because it led to the plain, and made their escape in a manner impracticable. *Jewish Hist.* lib. x. c. 11. *Patrick's*, *Le Clerc's*, and *Calmet's* Commentaries.

† Riblah was a city of Syria, in the country of Hamah, which country is the nearest to Judea, and which city, according to St Jerom, was the same with what was afterwards called Antioch; and as it was the most pleasant place in all Syria, here Nebuchadnezzar lay, to attend the success of the siege of Jerusalem, to send his army proper supplies, and to intercept any relief that might come to the besieged. *Patrick's* Commentary.

* Nebuchadnezzar no sooner cast his eye upon him, says Josephus, (*Jewish Antiq.* lib. x. c. 11.) than he called him all the faithless and perfidious names that he could think of. "Did you not promise me to manage the power and authority that I put you in possession, for my advantage and behoof? And am not I well requited, do you think, for making you a king in your brother Jehoiakim's place, by your employing of the credit and interest that I gave you, to the ruin of your patron and benefactor? But that God is great and just, who for the punishment of your treachery and ingratitude, hath now made you my prisoner." But there is a mistake in this speech of Nebuchadnezzar's, viz. his making Zedekiah succeed his brother Jehoiakin, whereas he was put in the place of his nephew Jehoiachin; but his nephew's reign was so very short (little more than three months), that this imperious monarch might look upon it as nothing at all.

|| Josephus takes notice, that the seeming contradiction in the prophecies of Ezekiel and Jeremiah,

sent to Babylon, and put in prison for life, to the full accomplishment of * what the two prophets, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, had foretold concerning him.

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As soon as Nebuchadnezzar had advice of the taking of Jerusalem, he sent Nebuzaradan, the captian of his guards, with orders to raze the place, plunder the temple, and carry the people that were left captives to Babylon; which he failed not to execute with the utmost rigour and cruelty. For having taken all the vessels out of the house of the Lord, and gathered together all the riches that he could find, either in the king's palace, or in any great mens houses, he *² set both the temple and city on fire, and overthrew all the walls, fortresses, and towers thereunto belonging, until he had brought the whole to a perfect desolation: And upon these two sad occasions, viz. the taking of the city, and the destruction of the temple, the prophet Jeremiah composed a mournful poem, which is called his Lamentations †, and the Jews observe two annual fasts, the one on the fourth month, which falls in with our June, and the other in the fifth month, which answers to part of our July, even to this day.

concerning the fate of Zedekiah, made that prince give no heed to what was foretold. Ezekiel's prophecy is delivered in these words:—"I will bring him to Babylon, to the land of the Chaldeans, yet shall he not see it, though he die there," chap. xii. 13. and Jeremiah's in these:—"He shall be delivered into the hands of the king of Babylon, and shall speak with him mouth to mouth, and his eyes shall behold his eyes," chap. xxxii. 4. both of which were literally accomplished; for Zedekiah was carried to Riblah, where he saw the king of Babylon, and spake to him, and beheld his children executed; but had afterwards his eyes put out, and was then carried to Babylon, where he was incapable of seeing the city, because he had lost his eye-sight. *Jewish Antiq.* lib. 10. c. 11. *Calmet's*, and *Patrick's* Commentaries.

* The reflection which Josephus makes upon this occasion is very good and moral:—"This may serve to convince even the ignorant, says he, of the power and wisdom of God, and of the constancy of his counsels, through all the various ways of his operations. It may likewise shew us, that God's foreknowledge of things is certain, and his Providence regular in the ordering of events; besides that, it holds forth a most exemplary instance of the danger of our giving way to the motions of sin and infidelity, which deprive us of the means of discerning God's judgments, which are ready to fall upon us." *Jewish Antiquities*, lib. x. c. 11.

*² The temple was burnt, from the time that it was built, four hundred years, says Sir John Marsham; four hundred and twenty-four years, three months, and eight days, says Primate Usher; four hundred and thirty years, says Abarbinel, and other learned Jews; But Josephus computes the thing still higher; for he tells us, that the temple was burnt four hundred and seventy years, six months, and ten days, from the building of it; one thousand and sixty years, six months, and ten days, from the Israelites coming out of the land of Egypt; one thousand nine hundred and fifty years, six months, and ten days, from the deluge; and three thousand five hundred and thirty years, six months, and ten days, from the creation of the world. [According to this chronology, as recti-

fied by Dr Hales, the temple was burnt 441 years after its foundation was laid by Solomon; 1062 years from the coming of the Israelites out of Egypt; 2569 years from the deluge; and 4825 years from the era of the creation.] Josephus stands amazed, that the second temple should be burnt by the Romans in the same month, and on the very same day of the month, that this was set on fire by the Chaldeans, and, as some of the Jewish doctors say, when the Levites were singing the same psalm in both destructions, viz. xciv. 23. "He shall bring upon them their own iniquity, and he shall cut them off in their own wickedness; yea, the Lord our God shall cut them off." *Patrick's Commentary*, and *Jewish Antiq.* lib. x. c. 11.

† The Hebrews call this book Echa, (how) from the first word in the text, "How does the city sit, &c." or Kinnoth, which signifies Lamentations, and the Greeks call it *Θένος*, a word of the like import. In the two first chapters, the author is employed in describing the calamities of the siege of Jerusalem; in the third, he deplores the persecutions which himself had suffered; in the fourth, he bemoans the fate of the city and temple, and Zedekiah's sad misfortune; and, in the fifth, he addresses his prayer to God in behalf of his brethren the Jews, under their dispersion and captivity. The whole is wrote in a very lively, tender, and pathetic style; and all the chapters, except the last, (which seems to have been of later composition than the rest) are in acrostic verse, i. e. every line or couplet begins in an alphabetical order, with some letter in the Hebrew alphabet. In the third chapter, each letter is successively thrice repeated; but in the second, third, and fourth chapters, there is this thing peculiar, viz. that the letter Pe is set before Ain; whereas, in the first chapter, as well as in all the acrostic psalms, Ain is continually first; but the reason of this is hard to tell: For what some advance, viz. that as the letter Ain signifies Seventy, the transposition seems to denote the confusion which the prophet was in, when he considered that this captivity was to last seventy years; this has too great an air of a fiction in it. *Bedford's Scripture Chronology*, lib. vi. c. 3. and *Calmet's Dictionary* under the word *Lamentations*.

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Having thus destroyed the city and temple, Nebuzaradan made all the people that he found in the place captives. Some of the chief of these, such as Seraiah the high priest, Zephaniah † the second priest, and about seventy others, he carried to Riblah, where Nebuchadnezzar †² caused them all to be put to death. The poorer and labouring part of the people, such as could till the ground, and dress the vineyards, he left behind him, and made Gedaliah †³ their governor; but as for all the rest, he carried them directly away to Babylon; only Jeremiah, (of whom Nebuchadnezzar had given him charge to take particular care) he not only took out of prison when he first came to Jerusalem, but, as the rest were upon their departure, gave him his option, whether he would go with him to Babylon, where he should be maintained very plentifully at the king's charge, or else remain in the country; and when the prophet had chose the latter, he dismissed him honourably, with an handsome present, and with letters of recommendation to the governor Gedaliah, wherein he gave him a strict charge to take particular care of him.

THE OBJECTION.

“**BUT** how careful soever the Babylonians might be of the prophet Jeremiah, because they might suppose that his predictions had done them service; yet certainly they would have entertained no great opinion either of him or them, had they been informed in what a wild and frantic manner, both he and some other prophets were accustomed to deliver them. For, (a) what can we say less of his making (b) bonds and yokes to put upon his own neck, and to send to several kings, neighbouring upon Judea, by the hands of their ambassadors, then residing in Jerusalem, to put them in mind of their future captivity to the king of Babylon? A notable present for any great minister to make to his prince upon his return from abroad! (c) What can we say less of (d) his taking a journey, at two several times, from Jerusalem to the river Euphrates, of about five hundred and fifty miles, merely to hide his girdle in the hole of the rock, that when he fetched it again, he might find it all mouldered and tattered, and upon that presumption, have it to say to his countrymen, that (e) ‘God would in like manner mar the pride of Judah, and the great pride of Jerusalem?’

(f) What can we say less of his brother Ezekiel's drawing figures upon a slate, (the common amusement of fools and children) and (g) portraying Jerusalem with a fort and mount, and camp and battering-rams, and an iron pot, to represent its walls; and all this for a sign to the people, that their city, in like manner, should be besieged? What less of

† The Jews call their second priest their Sagan, whose business it was to supply the function of the high priest, in case he was sick, or any other incapacity attended him. We find no such particular institution under the law; but Eleazar, the son of Aaron, who is styled “the chief over the chief of the Levites, and who had the oversight of them who kept the charge of the sanctuary,” Numb. iii. 32. and whose authority was not much inferior to that of the high priest, may (not improperly) be deemed one of that order. *Calmet's Commentary*.

†² Because, very probably, he looked upon them as the king's principal counsellors, who advised him to rebel against him. *Patrick's Commentary*.

†³ Gedaliah, we understand, was the son of Ahikam, Jeremiah's great friend; and it is not unlikely, that, by the prophet's advice, who exhorted all, both king and people, to surrender themselves to the Assyrians, Jer. xxxviii. 5, 17. he made his escape from the city, and went over to the king of Babylon; and for this reason was promoted to the government of Judea. *Calmet's and Patrick's Commentaries*.

(a) *Christianity as old as the Creation*, p. 250.

(b) Jer. xxvii. 2, 3.

(c) *Christianity*, *ibid.* p. 255.

(d) Jer. xiii. 1.

(e) *Ibid.* ver. 9.

(f) *Christianity*, *ibid.* p. 255.

(g) Ezek. iv. 1.

(a) his shaving his head and beard, (which was contrary to the law) his dividing, and burning his hair, and his (b) baking his bread with human dung, to prefigure the sore famine that would fall upon them in the siege? (c) What less of his digging through the wall of his house to bear off his goods at noon day, packing them up, and carrying them upon his shoulders from place to place, to denote the suddenness of their flight from the vanquished city? What less of his lying three hundred and ninety days on his left, and forty days on his right side, without being once allowed to turn himself, to signify the continuation of Israel's and Judah's captivity?

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These are actions, one would think, unbecoming the wisdom of God to enjoin, or the gravity of his prophets to perform; and yet (d) there is something more absurd and indecent, in requiring Hosea (e) to marry a known whore, that he might (with a better grace) upbraid the people with their apostacy; and (f) Isaiah, to go three years together naked, to exemplify the captivity of the Egyptians, when the 'Assyrians should lead them away prisoners, young and old, naked and barefoot, even with their buttocks uncovered, to the shame of Egypt,' as the prophet expresses it. But allowing that prophets were persons extraordinary, and that great allowances should be given to their actions, yet what shall we say to the history of Judith?

(g) It speaks of Nabuchodonosor, as king of Assyria; whereas all history makes mention of none under that name, but only of the king of Babylon. It speaks of Arphaxad, as the first builder of Ecbatana; whereas Herodotus expressly tells us, that Deioces was the founder of that fair city. It makes Arphaxad to be vanquished and slain by Nabuchodonosor; whereas the same historian assures us, that, after a long and prosperous reign, he died in peace. It speaks of Joakim, as high priest at this time; and yet it is certain, that there was no person of that order so named before the captivity. It places the chief management of public affairs in his hands; and yet it is evident, that, whether we suppose that this happened in Manasseh's or in Zedekiah's reign, the whole administration was in the power of the king. It represents Holofernes as behaving rather like a Persian than a Chaldean; and yet the name of the Persians was hardly known in the days of Nabuchodonosor. It gives him the honour of conquering more provinces in the space of three months, than another general would have marched through in that time; and yet it leaves upon him the disgrace of having the career of his conquests stopped by the little town of Bethulia.

How the Bethulians durst adventure to oppose so successful a conqueror, or how one single woman could take it into her head to rescue her country from so formidable an enemy, it is hard to conceive; but certainly the author of the history does not his heroine justice, to make her act and talk in a manner not so well comporting with all the sense of virtue and religion, (h) which she pretends to have.

For, to say nothing of the base and perfidious murder which she commits, when he puts in her mouth so many lies and prevarications, when he represents her as a woman void of modesty, who endeavoured to ensnare Holofernes in a sinful passion, and answered to the declarations of that passion with too little modesty and reserve; when, (i) in her prayer to God, he introduces her as commending Simeon's cruel perfidy to the Shechemites, (k) (though the patriarch Jacob held it in detestation) as requesting, that the (l) deceit of her lips might be successful to the accomplishment of her bloody design; as declaring, that her design in deserting the city (m) was purely to deliver it up to the general, without so much as the loss of one man; and as replying to the suggestions of the eunuch, in favour of his master's lust, (n) 'Who am I, that I should gainsay my lord; surely whatsoever pleaseth him, will I do speedily.' When we find

(a) Ezek. v. 1.

(b) Ibid. iv. 12.

(c) Ibid. xii. 3, &c.

(d) *Christianity as old as the Creation*, p. 256.

(e) Chap. i. 2.

(f) Chap. xx. 3, 4.

(g) *Calmet's Preface sur le livre de Judith*.

(h) Judith xi. 17.

(i) Ibid. ix. 2.

(k) Gen. xxxiv.

(l) Judith ix. 10.

(m) Chap. x. 13.

(n) Chap. xii. 14.

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him proceeding at this strange and incongruous rate, I say, we cannot but agree with the learned Grotius, that the whole is a parabolical fiction, written in the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, when he came into Judea to raise a persecution against the Jewish church; and that the design of it was, under that persecution, to confirm them in their hopes of some speedy and wonderful deliverance; that accordingly, by Judith, is meant Judea, which is called a widow, because she was destitute of relief; by Bethulia, the temple of God; by Nabuchodnosor, the devil; by Holofernes, the instrument of the devil in that persecution, viz. Antiochus Epiphanes; and by Judith's word, the prayers of the saints, which prevailed with God for their deliverance," &c.

ANSWER. WE, who have not received the book of Judith in our canon of Scripture, are not under the like necessity of vindicating its Divine inspiration and authority as are they who, (a) by a public act of council, have thought proper to admit it; but still we see no reason why we should recede from the opinion of the ancients, merely because some modern commentators (who, by the same freak of fancy, might have turned the plainest narrative in Scripture into an allegory) have adventured to call it a parable. Mysteries indeed may be made of any thing, and, in a pregnant brain, fit allusions will never be wanting, when once a full scope is given to the imagination, and a writer is permitted to invent what he pleases: but it would be madness to give up the truth of historical facts, merely because the man has ingenuity enough to apply them to a foreign purpose, especially when, upon examination, we find that there are sufficient proofs and testimonies of their reality, and no insuperable objections to the contrary.

Let us suppose, then, that the events contained in this history happened before the Babylonish captivity, and in the reign of Manasseh king of Judah; that Nabuchodnosor in Judith was the same with Saosduchinus in Ptolmey, who reigned over the Assyrians and Chaldeans, having subdued Esarhaddon king of Assyria; that Arphaxad is the same with Phraortes, mentioned in Herodotus, and that these two kings waged war with each other; that Saosduchinus having overcome Arphaxad, resolved to reduce all the nations spoken of in Judith under his dominion, and to that purpose sent Holofernes at the head of his forces to subdue those countries that would not submit; that at this time, Manasseh, who had been a little before delivered from the captivity, in which he had been carried to Babylon, dwelt at Jerusalem, concerning himself but little with the government, and leaving the care of public affairs to Joakim the high priest; that the inhabitants of Bethulia resolved, by God's assistance, to preserve their religion and liberties, and accordingly shut their gates against Holofernes; and that Judith, a woman of great courage and conduct, seeing the extremity to which the city was reduced, undertook to destroy Holofernes, and in her attempt succeeded. Supposing all this, I say, (and this is the substance of the whole) where do we find any thing contrary to the rules either of history or chronology?

The war, we suppose, commenced between Nabuchodnosor and Arphaxad in the year of the world 3347; the expedition and death of Holofernes were both in the next year 3348; Manasseh was taken and carried to Babylon 3349; he returned some years after, and died 3361: so that here we find a proper space for the things related in this history to be transacted; and that they were really thus transacted, we have the concurring testimony both of the Jewish and Christian Church, who, though they deny the book a place in the number of their sacred and Divine writings, yet did always esteem it as one of their apocryphal pieces, and a true and incontestable history, well contrived for the edification of the vulgar, though not of authority enough to determine any controversy in matters of religion.

(b) Josephus indeed makes no mention either of the book of Judith, or of her famous exploit in killing Holofernes; but his silence is no argument against what we assert;

(a) *Concil Trid. Sess. 4.*

(b) *Huetius's Demonst. Propos. 4.*

because he nowhere professes to take notice of every thing that occurred in the Jewish republic; on the contrary, (a) he openly declares, that his purpose was to relate only such things as were recorded in books which were originally written in Hebrew, and declared canonical, which that of Judith never was.

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It is some confirmation of its genuineness, however, that in writings which are of undoubted authority, we meet with some citations out of it: And therefore when we find St Luke, in Elizabeth's salutation of the virgin Mary, using the words—(b) “Blessed art thou among women,” which are manifestly taken from the compliment which Ozias makes Judith, (c) “Blessed art thou of the Most High God, above all the women upon earth;” and St Paul, in his exhortation to the Corinthians, using these—(d) “Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer,” which he certainly borrows from the tenth chapter of Judith, according to the Greek interpretation; we cannot forbear concluding, that in the apostolic age this book was looked upon as a piece of true and uncontroverted history.

Difficulties indeed there will occur in relation to names, dates, and other particulars, almost in all histories, and especially in the oriental (e), when we shall find, not only in writers of different characters, the Greek and Hebrew, the sacred and profane, but even in writers of the same nation, the same person under different appellations. Though therefore, in strictness of speech, it may be accounted an error in history to call the king of Nineveh by the name of Nabuchodonosor, yet as it was the style and manner of the Jews to denote any prince who lived beyond the Euphrates by that name, we need not wonder that we find an author, who lived in an age when the fame and reputation of Nabuchodonosor the Great had quite eclipsed the name of all his predecessors, calling another prince, who lived at a far distance, i. e. Saosduchinus, the king of Assyria, by the name of the king of Babylon, which perhaps at that time might be the standing name of every great and distant monarch.

Nor is there any great trespass against the truth of history, (f) in this author's asserting, that Arphaxad built the walls, the towers, and the gates of Ecbatana; since by Arphaxad he does not mean the Dejoces in Herodotus, but his son Phraortes, who succeeded him in the kingdom of Media; for that he must mean so is plain, because he gives us to understand that this Arphaxad was defeated, and (g) himself slain by the Assyrian archers, which even Herodotus (h) himself makes to be the fate, not of Dejoces the father, but of his son Phraortes, who having subdued the Persians (as he tells us), and made himself master of almost all Asia, was not content therewith, but coming at last to attack Nineveh and the Assyrian empire, was overcome and killed in the bold attempt.

His father indeed might lay the foundation of Ecbatana, and during his lifetime carry on the building; but a work of this kind is not so soon effected, but that he might leave the completion of it to his son, who being a prince of a warlike spirit, and having many forces under his command, is therefore in the book of Judith not improperly said to have made the gates of this royal city (i) “in height seventy cubits, and in breadth forty cubits, for the going forth of his mighty armies, and for the setting in array his footmen.”

Whoever looks into the order and succession of the Jewish high priests, as we have them delivered to us in the first book of Chronicles (k), in the books of Ezra (l), Nehemiah (m), and in the history of Josephus (n), will find them so intricate and perplexed, so many omissions and mislocations, such a diversity of names and numbers, and such

(a) *Jewish Antiquities*, lib. x. c. 11.

(b) Luke i. 42.

(c) Judith xiii. 18.

(d) 1 Cor. x. 10.

(e) *Calmet's Preface sur le Livre de Judith*.

(f) Judith i. 2, &c.

(g) *Ibid.* ver. 15.

(h) Lib. i. c. 97.

(i) Judith i. 4.

(k) Chap. vi. 3, &c.

(l) Chap. ii. 36, &c.

(m) Chap. vii. 39.

(n) Lib. viii. c. 15.

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seeming contrariety in the several accounts, as will cost him no small pains to reduce them to any tolerable regularity. The reason is, because the Scripture nowhere professes to give an exact catalogue of all such as had been admitted to that office and dignity until the captivity.

That in the book of Chronicles seems to bid fairest for it : But, upon examination, it will appear (*a*) to be only a direct lineal descent of the pontifical family, from Aaron to Jehozadak, the son of Seraiah, who was high priest at the captivity ; and not a succession of such as had borne the pontifical office, because several in that pedigree are inserted that were never high priests †, and several are omitted that were. The pedigrees of the high priests in Ezra and Nehemiah are but imperfect parts of that which we have in the book of Chronicles ; and as for the catalogue of Josephus, it is so corrupted that scarce five of the names in it do agree with any thing that we have in Scripture : So that, considering the defect of these accounts, we may be allowed to infer that Joakim, or Eliakim (for they are names both of the same import) might have been high priest in the time of Manasseh ; even though we should suppose that there was no mention made of him as such, either in the Holy Scriptures or in the history of Josephus.

(*b*) The Scripture however takes notice of one Eliakim, the son of Hilkiah, whom (according to the prophet (*c*) Isaiah) God promised “ to clothe with a robe, and to strengthen with a girdle,” i. e. to invest with the pontifical habit and office ; and therefore his “ being a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to the house of Judah, and his having the key of the house of David laid upon his shoulder ; so he should open, and none should shut, and he should shut and none should open,” does very well agree with the part which Joakim is said to have acted in the book of Judith. For though the supreme power was doubtless in Manasseh, yet since his return from the captivity, having either sequestered himself from public business, or (*d*) being engaged in the defence of his country in some other place, he might entrust the management of his affairs in Jerusalem to the high priest, who, having such an amplitude of power, and acting as chief minister in that place, might be well enough mentioned in this transaction of Judith, and (*e*) in the deputation of the elders from Jerusalem to thank her for it, without naming his master at all.

What the manners and customs of the Persians were, we may in some measure learn from the Greek historians, who, upon the dissolution of that monarchy by the conquest of Alexander, were obliged to say something of a people whom they succeeded in the dominion of the East ; but as these historians did not write till after the kingdom of Persia was destroyed, they have taken little or no notice of other oriental nations, and therefore what affinity there might be in their manners and usages we cannot tell ; and (*f*) consequently must not blame the author of the book of Judith for making Holofernes act out of character (as we think), unless we know how far the customs of the Assyrians and Persians did conform or disagree.

Herein however we know, that all oriental nations were unanimous, viz. in affecting pomp and grandeur ; and therefore (whether it was a Persian custom or no) we need not wonder that we find Holofernes, the captain-general of the Assyrian army, (*g*) “ resting upon his bed, under a canopy, which was woven with purple, and gold, and emeralds, and precious stones ;” and when Judith was introduced, “ coming out before

(*a*) *Prideaux's* Connection, anno 655.

† The high priests of the family of Eli are instances of the latter ; for they are left out of that pedigree, though they were high priests ; and those of the true race, who were excluded by them, are instances of the former ; for they are in it, though they were never high priests ; and it is very likely that, from the time of Solomon to the captivity, many more

such instances might have happened, to hinder that pedigree from being an exact catalogue of the high priests. *Prideaux's* Connection, anno 655.

(*b*) *Calmet's* Dissert. sur l'Order et la Succession, &c.

(*c*) Chap. xxii. 21, 22.

(*d*) *Prideaux's* Connection, anno 655.

(*e*) Judith xv. 8.

(*f*) *Calmet's* Preface

sur le Livre de Judith. (*g*) Judith x. 21, 22.

his tent † with silver lamps going before him.” We need not wonder at the rapidity of his conquests, since doubtless he had several lieutenant-generals under him, who, with strong detachments from the grand army, might, in separate bodies, invade all the provinces which the historian mentions; and since he nowhere met with any opposition until he came into Palestine, but expected a great deal in Egypt, he thought it advisable to halt for some time in the neighbourhood of Bethulia, and to put his men into quarters of refreshment, until the forces which he had detached upon sundry expeditions were come up and had joined him. And for this reason he was not so eager to press the siege of Bethulia, that he might not harass and fatigue his men in fighting against rocks and inaccessible mountains, but preserve them fresh and unfoiled for their great and more important expedition against Egypt.

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The truth is, the king of Nineveh was resolved, not only to subdue the several nations from the Euphrates to Ethiopia, but intended likewise to oblige them all to (a) adore and acknowledge him only to be god*; and therefore the Bethulians, who could not without impiety and a renunciation of their religion submit to the dominion of such a king, had reason to promise themselves the assistance of God in the prosecution of this war: And Judith, who found herself under a Divine and irresistible impulse to go upon so adventurous an exploit, had good reason to hope for success against a prince who had declared himself an enemy to the God of heaven, and an usurper of that honour and adoration which belonged to him alone.

(b) “If thy brother, the son of thy mother, or thy son, or thy daughter, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend which is as thine own soul, entice thee secretly, saying, Let us serve other gods which thou hast not known, thou, nor thy fathers—Thou shalt not consent unto him, nor hearken unto him, neither shall thine eye pity him, neither shalt thou spare, neither shalt thou conceal him, but thou shalt surely kill him:” And in pursuance of this law, much more might Judith, or any other inhabitant of Bethulia, whom God had inspired with the like courage and magnanimity, endeavour to counterplot the designs of any person who in an hostile manner should come, not only to invade their civil rights and liberties, but to extirpate their religion; and instead of enticing, to compel them by force of arms to receive a form of idolatry “which neither they nor their fathers knew.”

Many things may be alleged against Judith’s method of proceeding in this affair, but they are most of them reducible to the common stratagems of war, which not only the

† Holofernes may be thought, in this piece of state, to imitate the custom of the Persians, among whom it was usual to carry fire before their kings, as it was afterward done before the Roman emperors, and is at present before the emperor of the Turks; but the reason of this might be no more than either that Judith and her maid were apprehended, and brought to Holofernes before it was quite day, or that the inner apartment of his tent was so very dark, that he had lights continually burning in it. *Calmet’s Commentary on Judith x. 22.*

(a) Judith vi. 2.

* How great soever the folly and impiety was, in desiring to pass for a god, yet the king of Nineveh was not the only prince that we find infected with it. The flatterers of Darius the Median proposed to him, to make a decree, that under pain of being cast “into the den of lions,” no one should dare to ask a “petition of any god or man,” but of him only, for the space of thirty days, Dan. vi. 7. [And the emperor of China has divine honours paid to him at this day.] When Alexander the Great took

it into his head to exact the same divine honours of his people that they had formerly paid to the kings of Persia his predecessors, he found people about him base and prostitute enough to commend the design, and to maintain, that thus to advance kings above the rank of mortal men, was not only a pious, but a prudent and advantageous thing; for so the historian expresses it, “*Persas non tantum piè, sed etiam prudenter, reges suos inter Deos colere, majestatem enim imperii salutis esse tutelam,*” Quint. Curt. lib. viii. The Egyptians had their princes in the like veneration, and looked upon them as highly raised above the condition of other men: but the Grecians, it must be owned, had all this baseness and abject flattery in a just detestation, insomuch, that the Athenians put Timagoras to death, for having prostrated himself before the king of the Persians; and Sperchius and Bullis, two Lacedemonians, though then in a state of captivity, could not be brought to pay that adoration to Artaxerxes which he required of every one that approached him. *Plut. in Artax.*

(b) Deut. xiii. 6, &c.

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law of arms, but the commands of God, in some cases, and the examples of several of the best men in Sacred History, have declared to be allowable. What comes not under this denomination, we shall not pretend to vindicate; (a) for the notion of mental reservations and ironical speeches, which are not allowed in common conversation, are but the poor subterfuge which commentators have used to apologise for the conduct that they can by no means justify.

The history indeed represents this Judith as a woman of great courage; but it no where intimates that she was without faults. The manner of her preparation for the undertaking, and the success wherewith it was attended, may make us presume that its design was originally from God; but then the continued train of falsehood and dissimulation wherewith it was carried on, must needs persuade us, that the means of conducting it was left to the woman, who, on this occasion, has given us a very remarkable specimen of the cunning and sagacity, the guile and artifice, of her sex *.

One thing however may be said, and that without any forced explication, in favour of her conduct,—That her answer to the eunuch's suggestion she might design for no more than a common compliment, which the situation of her affairs at that time obliged her to make. (b) She might perceive, very likely, the bad design which the Assyrian general had upon her; but she did not think herself concerned to discover that she perceived it. She pretended in some measure to be ignorant of it; and to pretend an ignorance in what is proposed, when the thing is naughty and will not bear examination, is a point of modesty as well as prudence; as, where it will admit of a double construction, there to take it in the better sense, is even reputed an act of candour and good breeding. "Let not this fair damsel fear (says the old pander) to come to my Lord, and to be honoured in his presence, and drink wine, and be merry with us, and be made this day as one of the daughters of the Assyrians, who serve in the house of Nabuchodonosor." How the daughters of Assyria who served in this capacity were used, Judith very probably had been informed; but since the eunuch seemed to put it on the foot of a great favour and honour done her, she could not do less than return him a compliment. But then we all know, (c) that the offers of service which upon every occasion we are so apt to make to one another, and those expressions of submission and respect which so commonly pass among us, are not to be taken in a literal sense, because they always imply a tacit condition: And therefore the answer which the historian puts in Judith's mouth, "Surely, whatever pleaseth him I will do speedily," will fairly admit of this construction, "Whatever Holofernes shall desire of me, so far as it is consistent with my duty, my honour, and my religion, I will not fail to do."

Thus we have endeavoured to satisfy most of the popular objections, and to reconcile most of the seeming inconsistencies that occur in the history of Judith; and if there still remain any that cannot sufficiently be cleared up, they ought in justice to be imputed to our ignorance and want of better information. Had we the ancient books of the chronicles of the kings of Israel and Judah (to which we are so often referred in Scripture), or had we the histories of the Assyrians, Chaldeans, Medes, Persians, and Egyptians (with whom the Jewish nation had so long an intercourse), perfect and entire, it is not to be doubted, but that many of the difficulties which at present seem unsurmountable, would then easily subside and sink into nothing. The plain truth is, "There was scarce ever an history written, according to our learned Prideaux's (d) ob-

(a) *Calmet's Commentary on Judith x. 13.*

[* This I think is a harsh censure. We certainly are not bound to vindicate in every thing the conduct of Judith, but we should not forget, that she went out of Bethulia to the camp of Holofernes by the authority of those, who had a right to employ every stratagem of war in defence of the city or town commit-

ted to their care; and that the stratagems which she employed prevented, for that time at least, the effusion of much blood, which otherwise must have been inevitably shed.]

(b) *Calmet's Preface sur le Livre de Judith.*

(c) *Ibid.*

(d) *Connection, Anno 655.*

servation, but what in the very next age will seem to have inconsistencies enough in it as to time, place, and other circumstances, when the memory of men concerning them begin to fail; and therefore we may be much more apt to blunder, when we take our view at the distance of above two thousand years, and have no other light to direct us to our object, but such glimmerings from broken scraps of history as are, in effect, next to nothing."

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The like is to be said of the several seeming absurdities that may be observed in the writing and behaviour of the prophets:—That were we sufficiently acquainted with the style and manner of writing that was in use in those days, and especially in the eastern countries, we should think it no strange thing to find them expressing themselves by types and figures, parabolical representations, and emblematical actions. For, however it comes about, so it is, that mankind has all along been marvellously taken with story and picture. (a) These excite the curiosity of our nature: They tempt us to learn, help us to remember, and convey instruction to the mind in a more pleasing and effectual manner than plain documents can: And hence it came to pass, that a great part of the learning of the wise men of the East consisted in (b) "prophecies, in subtle and dark parables, and in the secrets of grave sentences," as the author of the book of Ecclesiasticus has branched it out; for (c) "to understand a proverb, and the interpretation, the words of the wise and their dark sayings," was the very best description that Solomon himself could give of wisdom. (d) Among the ancients, indeed, mythology was in the highest esteem. The Egyptians, who were in great reputation for learning, delivered their notions in hieroglyphics; and from them the Grecians took the mode of couching their meaning in fable. Hesiod, (e) who contends with Homer for antiquity, is supposed by Quintilian to be the author of the fables which go under the name of Æsop; but however this be, the very supposition of his being so, makes it probable that he did write fables, as perhaps most men of learning and note in those days accustomed themselves to this form of writing.

(f) But besides this parabolical way of writing, which was in great vogue among the ancients, and to which the Jews, by a kind of natural genius, were wonderfully inclined, the people of the East had a way of expressing themselves by actions as well as words, and to enforce the matter they were upon, would frequently make use of outward and visible signs and representations. (g) This, our learned Mr Mede shews, was the practice of the Indians, Persians, and Egyptians; and even among the Romans (who were a people that used great modesty of style, and more gravity in their actions than many other nations) it was a customary thing in their orations and pleadings, to use all arts to raise the passions, by actions and representations as well as words; insomuch, (h) that they would frequently hang up the picture of the thing they were to speak to. Cicero tells us of himself, that he sometimes took up a child and held it in his arms to move compassion; and to excite horror and indignation, nothing was more common than for the accusers to produce, in open court, a bloody sword, or the garments of the wounded; to shew the bones that had been taken out of the wound, or the scars that it had left behind it, "Quarum rerum ingens plerumque vis est (says (i) Quintilian), veluti in rem præsentem animos hominum ducentium;" for it can hardly otherwise happen, but that by this means they should fix the attention of their hearers, when at one and the same time they speak to their eyes and ears both.

From these few remarks it appears, in general, that the figurative expressions of the prophets, their actions, and types, and parables, were not incongruous to the customs of the times and places where they lived, and yet very proper means to give a lively and

(a) *Reeve's Sermons.*

(b) *Ecclus. xxxix. 1, &c.*

(c) *Prov. i. 6.*

(d) *Jenkins's*

Reasonableness of Christianity, vol. ii. c. 6.

(e) *Quintil. Instit. lib. v. c. 11.*

(f) *Light-*

foot's Heb. and Talmud. Exercit. in Matth. xiii. 3.

(g) *Comment. in Apocal. part i. p. 470.*

(h) *Cic. pro P. Sextio.*

(i) *Instit. lib. v. c. 1.*

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affecting representation of the message they had to deliver : And so proceed we to the passages which seem to give disgust.

To take several of these in their literal sense, would be an effectual way to disparage the Divine precept, which, according to this acceptation, would put the prophet upon acting in a manner quite inconsistent with common prudence : And therefore interpreters are generally agreed, that the things of this kind, which will not come under a literal construction, were either transacted in vision, i. e. the prophet in a dream, or some other deliquium, imagined that he did such and such things, and then related them to the people ; or that they were parables which God dictated to the prophet, and the prophet recited to the people : Only it must be observed, (a) that the literal interpretation of a text always claims the preference, if there be not some weighty reason against it, or some intimation in the text itself, that the words are figurative and enigmatical.

The prophet Jeremiah (b) is ordered by God “to take the wine-cup of his fury at his hand, and to carry it up and down, far and near Jerusalem, and the cities of Judah, and the kings and princes thereof ; to Pharaoh king of Egypt, and his servants, princes, and people ; to all the Arabians, and kings of the land of Uz ; to the kings of the land of the Philistines, Edom, Moab, and Ammon ; to the kings of Tyre and Zidon, and of the isles beyond the sea, Dedan, Tema, and Buz ; to the kings of Zimri, of the Medes, and Persians, and all the kings of the North.” Now, since it was morally impossible for the prophet to visit all these kings and nations in person, and the nature of the thing would not admit of any real performance, it could be no otherwise done than in vision. “The cup of God’s wrath” is a common figure in Scripture, to denote the severity of his judgments ; and therefore, when the prophet says, that “he took the cup at the Lord’s hand, and made all the nations drink thereof,” he can mean no more than that he prophesied against these several nations, and, by virtue of the spirit of foreknowledge which God had imparted to him, pronounced their doom.

(c) In like manner, his sending yokes and bonds to several kings, whose ambassadors were then at Jerusalem, can hardly be understood in a sense altogether literal ; because it is not probable, either that the ambassadors would take the yokes at his hands, or carry them to their respective masters ; but then, as yokes and bonds are common figures in Scripture to denote captivity, and the miseries that attend it, his sending the yokes and bonds may signify no more, * than his declaring from God the fate of these princes when the king of Babylon was let loose upon them. Only it must be observed, that the prophet might really make some of these yokes and bonds (as the Scripture says expressly that he put one upon himself) to enliven the idea, and make the impression of what he was to say more strong and emphatical : For these ornamental figures, and affecting images interspersed with it, added new force and dignity to the prophet’s message, made it more awful and solemn in the delivery, and gave it the advantage of a deeper and more durable impression.

In like manner, again, the whole affair of this prophet’s girdle, his carrying it to the Euphrates, hiding it in a rock, and, at such a determinate time, going for it again, and finding it quite rotten and spoiled, can hardly be taken in a literal sense ; because the vast † distance of the place, and trivialness of the errand, as well as the impossibility

(a) *Scripture Vindicated*, part iii. p. 72.

(b) Chap. xxv. 15, &c.

(c) *Scripture Vindicated*, part iii. p. 88.

* Potest enim phraseologia esse allegorica, Jeremiæ haud insueta, ita ut dimissio jugi et lorarum per legatos sit regibus, per ipsorum legatos, significare servitutem hoc ipso signo ipsis portendi ; cum præsertim vix credibile sit harum gentium legatos (qui et ipsi hariolorum blanditiis irritati erant, v. 9.) vel vo-

luisse, vel ausos fuisse, juga a Jeremiâ oblata dominis suis perferre. *Henric. Michael.* Bib. Heb. in notis ad locum.

† The learned Bochart has invented a new solution of this difficulty. He supposes, that as it is a common thing for the initial letter to be dropped in the names of places and persons, the Hebrew word *Phrath* may be supposed to stand for *Ephrath*, or *Ephratah*, which is *Bethlehem*, above five or six miles

of getting out of Jerusalem, if it was then invested by the Babylonians, make strongly against it; and therefore we may suppose, that all this was transacted in the prophet's imagination only; that, in the night-time, God sent upon him a vision, wherein all this series of things seemed to be performed by him, to imprint it the deeper upon his understanding, viz. that the kingdom of Judah, which was once as nearly united to God as the girdle is to a man's loins, should be utterly ruined and destroyed; and though the river Euphrates be at a wide distance from the prophet's place of abode, yet, in the vision, (which is never confined to places) it might be more aptly made choice of than any other, thereby to denote to the Jews, that over that river they were to be carried captive to the city of Babylon.

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The short of the matter is,—Several things, which the prophets set down as matters of fact, might not be actually done, but only represented as done, to make the more lively impression upon their readers and hearers. Nay, there are several commands which God gives Ezekiel in particular, such as his “lying for three hundred and ninety days on one side,” (which was next to a thing impossible) “his baking his bread with man's dung,” (which was a thing unseemly) and his “shaving his head and beard,” (which, as he was a priest, (a) was a thing expressly forbidden him) that the prophet is never once said to have performed, nor were they indeed given him with an intent that he should perform them, but only relate them to the people, and so make them “signs unto the house of Israel,” i. e. either resemblances of things past, or prognostications of things to come.

St Peter, we may observe, (b) was commanded in his vision to do what he never did: “Rise, Peter, kill and eat;” nay, by his reply, it appears, that himself did not think that he was anyways bound to obey the command; “Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean.” And yet the use which he made of this vision, was to report it to the church as a sign or emblematical indication of God's having accepted the Gentiles into the gospel terms of salvation. And, in like manner, when Ezekiel, in his vision, received the command of “shaving his head and his face,” his answer might have been in St Peter's strain, “Not so, Lord;” for, by thy law, I am forbidden “to make baldness upon my head, or to shave off the corner of my beard;” and yet he might relate this vision to the people, the better to enforce the threats which God had authorised him to denounce against Jerusalem: (c) “Therefore thus saith the Lord God, behold I, even I am against thee, and will execute judgments in the midst of thee, in the sight of the nations; and I will do in thee that which I have not done, and whereunto I will not do any more the like, because of all thy abominations.”

In a word, the prophets in their visions might receive several commands concerning things illegal or indecent; (d) but then they considered these, not as formal commands, but as types, emblems, and predictions, delivered to them in a perceptive form, in order to imprint the things intended the deeper upon their minds, and to make the representation thereof to the people with whom they had to do more lively and affecting: Nor should it seem strange that the Divine Wisdom, in this case, makes choice of things improper, and sometimes impracticable, since his purpose in so doing is to make the prophet perceive at once, that it was all symbolical, and not designed to direct him how and what to act, but how and what to apprehend, foresee, and foretell of things to come.

Whether the command given to Hosea to marry a woman that either had been, or would prove a prostitute, is to have a literal or figurative construction, commentators

distant from Jerusalem; by which means the prophet's journey is greatly shortened, and the pains of going thither once again is not much. But whether this solution (as ingenious as it is) will bear the test, is left to the examination of the critics. *Calmet's Com-*

mentary, and *Scripture Vindicated*, in locum.

(a) Levit. xxi. 5.

(b) Acts x, 13, 14.

(c) Ezek. v. 8, 9.

(d) *Scripture Vindicated*, part iii. p. 94.

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and critics, both ancient and modern, are not a little divided; but since in the figurative there is no violence offered to Scripture, and in the literal there is nothing immoral or absurd, it matters not much in which sense we take it. In Scripture, it is a common thing to represent the defection of a people from the service of God, (a) by the metaphors of adultery and fornication; and therefore, to introduce the prophet as marrying a woman that proved an adulteress, as having several children by that marriage, and as calling these children by such names as denoted the destruction of a rebellious nation, is no bad manner of expressing the near relation between God and his people; his constant care in preserving and multiplying them; their vile ingratitude in revolting from him; and the great severity wherewith he intended to punish their revolt. Or, take the words in a literal sense, and that the prophet was really commanded to marry a woman of a bad reputation; yet might there not be many prudential considerations to make such a match eligible? The Scripture, we may observe, in the appellations which it gives persons and things, has less regard to what they actually are, than to what they once were; and hence it is, that Moses's rod, when turned into a serpent, (b) is still called his rod; and those whom our Saviour healed of their several infirmities, are still the deaf (c), the lame, &c. even after they are cured. Now, if the woman whom Hosea was ordered to marry, (though once she had lived an incontinent life) was now become chaste and virtuous, where was the great absurdity of his actually doing it, since (besides other motives to us unknown) he was, in this action, to be a "sign to the Israelites," and to set an example to them, "who had gone a-whoring after other gods," (d) that, if they would forsake their false deities, and return to their true God, the God of their fathers, he would still accept, and receive them, in the like manner as the prophet had taken an adulteress to his wife, upon assurance that ever, for the future, she would prove faithful to his bed?

The account of Ezekiel's packing up his household goods, removing them by night, and breaking through the walls of his house to carry them away more secretly, though some interpreters have looked upon it as the mere narration of a vision, or the recital of a parable, yet to me it seems more probable that the whole was transacted just in the manner wherein it is described; especially considering the near resemblance between the prediction and the event. For, after that the prophet, by the symbolical action of removing his goods in a fright, had typified the taking of Jerusalem, he proceeds to apply what he had done in this prediction:—(e) "I am your sign; like as I have done, so shall it be done unto them: They shall remove, and go into captivity; they shall dig through the wall to carry out thereby; and the prince that is among them, shall bear upon his shoulder in the twilight, and shall go forth.—My net also will I spread upon him, and he shall be taken in my snare, and I will scatter, toward every wind, all that are about him to help him, and all his bands." And accordingly the event happened; for (f) "when the city was broken up," says the historian, "all the men of war fled by night, by the way of the gate, between two walls, which is by the king's gardens, (for the Chaldees were against the city round about) and the king went the way toward the plain; but the army of the Chaldees pursued after the king, and overtook him in the plains of Jericho, and all his army were scattered from him."

The like is to be said of the same prophet's being ordered by God to delineate upon a slate the city of Jerusalem, and the Babylonish camp investing it, viz. that the portraiture of the fort, the mount, the camp, and battering rams against it, (g) are so very like to what happened at the siege, that we can hardly forbear presuming, that the whole narration is literal, or that the prophet did really draw a sketch of the siege of

(a) Levit. xvii. 7. Jer. iii. 1. Ezek. xvi. 15.—xxiii. 3, &c.

(b) Exod. vii. 12.

(c) Matth. xi. 5. and John ix. 17.

(d) Jenkins's Reasonableness of Christianity, vol. ii. p. 53.

(e) Ezek. xii. 11, &c.

(f) 2 Kings xxv. 4, 5.

(g) Josephus's Jewish Antiq. lib. 10. c. 11.

the city, as God commanded him. For since (as we observed before) it was a practice sometimes among the best of orators to represent in a picture the particular thing they were to speak to, thereby to gain the readier attention of their hearers, why should it be thought inconsistent with the character of a prophet, or any diminution of his discretion or gravity, to do the same thing, in order to gain the same end ?

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To walk naked indeed for three years together, as the prophet Isaiah (*a*) is said to have done, does not so well comport with the rules of decency, and seems to carry in it an appearance of frenzy or madness ; but we are to remember, that in Scripture-phrase, those are said to go naked, who either go without (*b*) their upper garment, or without the (*c*) habit that is proper to their station or quality ; and that the Hebrew text does not say that Isaiah walked in this manner for three years together, but that he thus walked as a type or sign of the three years calamity, which would come upon Egypt and Ethiopia. So that the sense of the passage is this :—That Isaiah went about without his upper garment, in token that the Egyptians and Arabians should undergo a calamity of three years continuance from the king of Assyria ; but how long, or how often he did this, the Scripture is silent ; only it may be presumed, that he did it in such a manner, (whether three days together, or thrice the same day) as might best prefigure the three years calamity : and, since the action was to be typical, the prophet who, through the iniquity of the times, could scarce gain the audience of the people at any rate, was to appear in an uncommon garb, and with something particular in his manner, to strike the eyes and awaken the observation of all around him : for, had not there been some visible impropriety in the action, something seemingly inconsistent with the character of so grave a man, it would not have answered the purpose of exciting the curiosity and attention of the people for which it was intended.

Thus we have endeavoured to vindicate the actions of the prophets, or rather the wisdom of God which put them upon such actions, from all imputations of weakness and folly ; and shall only observe farther, that our misconceptions of these things must in a great measure proceed from our ignorance of the prophetic style, (says a learned examiner of this style) :—(*d*) “For all places of Scripture that are expressed in allegorical or proverbial forms of speech, or by types and resemblances of things, (as all prophecies more or less are), must needs have been better understood in those times when they were written, than they can be now, because we have but an imperfect notion of many things to which the allusion is made, and from whence the similitude is taken.”

[THIS is, on the whole, rather an able defence of the conduct of the prophets, to which our author's deist urges his objection. Something to the same purpose has been already stated in our vindication of the command given to Abraham to offer up his son Isaac for a burnt offering to God, as well as in a note on the third Chapter of the third Book of this Work ; but the most complete vindication of the symbolical actions of the prophets that I have any where seen, is the following by Bishop Warburton.

“Language, as appears from the nature of the thing, from the records of history, and from the remains of the most ancient languages yet remaining, was at first extremely rude, narrow, and equivocal ; so that men would be perpetually at a loss on any new conception, or uncommon accident, to explain themselves to one another ; the art of enlarging language by a scientific analogy being a late invention : this would necessarily set them upon supplying the deficiencies of speech by apt and significant signs. Accordingly, in the first ages of the world, mutual converse was upheld by a mixed discourse of words and ACTIONS ; hence came the Eastern phrase of *the voice of the sign* ; and use and custom, as in most other affairs of life, improving what had arisen out of

(*a*) Chap. xx. 3, 4. (*b*) John xxi. 7. Acts xix. 16. Mark xiv. 51. Matth. xxv. 36.

(*c*) 1 Sam. xix. 24. 2 Sam. vi. 20.

(*d*) *Jenkins's Reasonableness*, vol. ii. c. 7.

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necessity into ornament ; this practice subsisted long after the necessity was over ; especially amongst the Eastern people, whose natural temperament inclined them to a mode of conversation, which so well exercised their vivacity by motion ; and so much gratified it, by a perpetual representation of material images. Of this we have innumerable instances in holy Scripture ; as where the false prophet pushed with horns of iron, to denote the entire overthrow of the Syrians (*a*) ; where Jeremiah, by God's direction, hides the linen girdle in a hole of the rock near Euphrates ; where he breaks a potter's vessel in the sight of the people ; puts on bonds and yokes, and casts a book into Euphrates (*b*), where Ezekiel, by the same appointment, delineates the siege of Jerusalem on a tile ; weighs the hair of his head and bread in balances ; carries out his household-stuff through a hole made in the wall ; and joins together two sticks, after writing on them, for Judah and Israel (*c*). By those actions the prophets instructed the people in the will of God, and conversed with them in signs ; but where God teaches the prophet, and, in compliance to the custom of that time, condescends to the same mode of instruction, then the significative action is generally changed into a vision, either natural or extraordinary : as where the prophet Jeremiah is bid to regard the rod of the almond tree, and the seething pot ; the work on the potter's wheel, and the baskets of good and bad figs (*d*) ; and the prophet Ezekiel, the ideal scene of the resurrection of dry bones (*e*). The significative action, I say, was, in this case, generally changed into a vision ; but not always. For as sometimes, where the instruction was for the people, the significative action was, perhaps, in *vision* ; so, sometimes again, though the information was only for the prophet, God would set him upon a real expressive action, whose obvious meaning conveyed the intelligence proposed or sought.—The excellent Maimonides, not attending to this primitive mode of information, is much scandalized at several of these actions, unbecoming, as he supposed, the dignity of the prophetic office ; and is therefore for resolving them into supernatural visions impressed on the imagination of the prophet ; and this, because some few of them may, perhaps, admit of such an interpretation. In which he is followed by Christian writers, much to the discredit, as I conceive, of revelation ; and to the triumph of libertinism and infidelity ; the actions of the prophets being delivered as realities, and those writers representing them as *mean, absurd, and fanatical, and exposing the prophets to contempt*. But what is it they will gain by this expedient ? The charge of absurdity and fanaticism will follow the prophet in his visions, when they have removed it from his waking actions : for if these actions were absurd and fanatical in the real representation, they must needs be so in the imaginary, the same turn of mind operating both asleep and awake. The judicious reader therefore, cannot but observe, that the reasonable and true defence of the prophetic writings is what is here offered, where we show, that information by action was, at this time and place, a very familiar mode of conversation."

In proof of the origin which the ingenious Prelate assigns to this mode of conversation—partly by words and partly by action, it is enough to appeal to the practice of all barbarous nations even at this day. The North-American Indians are remarkable for gesticulation when eager to make themselves understood ; and their language, though extremely confined, is highly figurative. Hence their speakers are, by the cultivated nations of Europe, who have retained as ornamental, what, as the Bishop observes, was originally the offspring of necessity, considered as natural orators ; and unquestionably their mode of speaking in their assemblies, is calculated to make a deep impression on the minds of their audience, by whom no attention would be paid to the most momentous truths expressed with calmness and in abstract terms. For the purpose of fixing the attention, action, in a greater or less degree, has indeed been em-

(*a*) 1 Kings xxii. 11.
(*d*) Jerem. i. xviii. xxiv.

(*b*) Jerem. xiii. xix. xxvii. li.
(*e*) Ezek. xxxvii. 2.

(*c*) Ezek. iv. v. xii. xxxvii.

played in aid of language, by the orators of all nations; and it was for this purpose employed by the Jewish prophets. But “this being seen, to use the words of the learned Bishop, all charge of absurdity, and suspicion of fanaticism, vanish of themselves. The *absurdity* of an action consists in its being extravagant and insignificant; but use and a fixed application made the actions in question both sober and pertinent. The *fanaticism* of an action consists in fondness for such actions as are unusual, and for foreign modes of speech; but those of the prophets were idiomatic and familiar. To illustrate this last observation by a domestic example: When the sacred writers talk of being *born after the Spirit*, of being *fed with the sincere milk of the word*, of *putting their tears into a bottle*, of *bearing testimony against lying vanities*, of *taking the veil from mens hearts*, and of *building up one another*, they speak the common, yet proper and pertinent phraseology of their country; and not the least imputation of fanaticism can stick upon these original expressions. But when we see our own countrymen reprobate their native idiom, and affect to employ only Scripture phrases in their whole conversation, as if some inherent sanctity resided in the Eastern modes of expression, we cannot choose but suspect such men to be far gone in the delusions of a heated imagination; and the same may be said of significative actions.” *Div. Leg.* book iv. sect. 4.]

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DISSERTATION V.

OF THE SACRED CHRONOLOGY, AND PROFANE HISTORY, DURING THIS PERIOD.

THE particular differences, and seeming incongruities, in point of chronology, that have occurred in this period of history, we have endeavoured to solve and reconcile in the notes that are annexed to it: (a) But there is a passage in the prophet Ezekiel, generally supposed to relate to this time, wherein some learned chronologers do not so well agree.

The passage is this:—(b) “I have laid upon thee the years of their iniquity, according to the number of days, three hundred and ninety days; so shalt thou bear the iniquity of the house of Israel. And when thou shalt accomplish them, lie again on thy right side, and thou shalt bear the iniquity of the house of Judah forty days. I have appointed thee each day for a year.” The generality of commentators, who take God’s laying upon the prophet the years of his people’s iniquity, to denote his forbearing to punish them for their offences for such a determinate time, do agree, (c) that there is an exact sum of three hundred and ninety years mentioned in this place; that this sum is to begin from the time that Jeroboam first set up the golden calves; and that the 390 and 40 years are not distinct numbers, but that the less is to be included in the greater; but then the question is, where we are to end these three hundred and ninety years? or to which of the captivities do they extend?

Several learned men of great authority make these years to end (d) at the last captivity by Nebuzaradan, captain of the guards under Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and four years after the last destruction of Jerusalem, which happened in the eleventh year of Zedekiah; for from the time of the setting up the calves, (e) say they, to this

(a) See the Appendix to this Dissertation.
ture Chronology, lib. vi. c. 1.
Marshal, in their Chronological Tables.

(b) Ezek. iv. 5, 6.
(d) Jer. lii. 30,

(c) Bedford’s Scrip-
(e) Primate Usher, Dr Prideaux, and

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last instance of God's severity, are just 390 years; from the eighteenth year of Josiah (when the kingdom of Judah entered into covenant with God) to this time are just 40 years; and by this last captivity, all the predictions of the several prophets relating thereunto were perfectly fulfilled.

It is to be observed, however, that this last captivity was so small, so sudden, and attended with so little difficulty, as can by no means come up to the pomp and solemnity of the prophet's description, in that very chapter wherein this epocha is mentioned. The account which we have of the invasion is this: (a)—“Whilst Nebuchadnezzar lay at the siege of Tyre, he sent Nebuzaradan with part of his army to invade the land of Israel, on purpose, as is supposed, to revenge the death of Gedaliah; because there was no other reason for his falling upon the poor remains of those miserable people, whom he himself had left and settled there. In this expedition, Nebuzaradan seized upon all the Jews whom he found in the land, made them captives, and sent them to Babylon; but they all amounted to no more than seven hundred and forty five persons.” Here was no resistance made, no siege maintained, no famine incurred. The people fell a cheap and easy prey, because they were ruined, and destroyed before. But now, in the expedition to which the prophet (b) alludes, Jerusalem was besieged, and the defendants reduced to the necessity of (c) “eating bread by weight and with care, and of drinking water by measure and with astonishment,” as he expresses it.

For this reason, we should rather incline to the hypothesis of those who end both the computations at the destruction of Jerusalem in the eleventh of Zedekiah; who, according as they compute the time from Jeroboam's apostacy, make the period of God's forbearing the house of Israel, from thence to the destruction of Jerusalem, to contain just three hundred and ninety years; and who begin the forty years of God's forbearance of the house of Judah from the mission of the prophet Jeremiah to preach repentance to them, i. e. (d) from the thirteenth year of Josiah, when he was first called to this office; from which time, to the last year of Zedekiah, when Jerusalem was destroyed, were exactly forty years. For (e) since the hundred and twenty years of God's forbearing the Old World is reckoned from the mission of Noah to preach repentance, there seems to be some parity of reason, that his forty years forbearance of the kingdom of Judah should be reckoned from the like mission of Jeremiah.

But there is another way of explaining this passage: for if by the word *iniquity*, which God imputes to the house of Israel and Judah, we are to understand the punishment of their iniquity (which is very common, and seems to be the most natural sense in this place), it is plain, that as the whole tenor of the prophet's discourse seems to denote an event future, and far distant, it may not improperly relate to the continuation of God's punishment upon the tribes of Israel and Judah for their great and manifold provocations.

(f) Now the punishment of Israel for their iniquities may be said to commence at the taking of Samaria, in the reign of Hoshea; as that of Judah did at the taking of Jerusalem in the reign of Zedekiah. If then we reckon from the destruction of Jerusalem to the time when Cyaxares the II. (whom (g) the Scripture calls Darius the Median) became king of Babylon, we shall find it about forty years; and as he was a known favourer of the Jews, and might therefore give them leave to return home, we may be allowed to infer, that here the term of their punishment did expire. And, in like manner, if we reckon from Shalmaneser's taking Samaria to the last victory which Alexander the Great obtained over Darius Codomannus, whereby he became sole monarch of all Asia, we shall find it to be much about 390 years: And as his kindness to the Jews

(a) *Prideaux's Connection*, anno 584.

(d) Jer. i. 1, 2.
Tribus, &c.

(e) Gen. vi. 3.
(g) Dan. v. 31.

(b) Ezek. iv. 1, 2, 3.

(c) Ibid. ver. 16.

(f) *Calmet's Dissert.* ou l'on examine si les dix

was very remarkable, we may here date the restoration of their liberty, and consequently their release from the punishment which God inflicted on them for their sins.

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Thus, accordingly as we take the sense of the words in the prophet, the history which is alluded to puts on a different aspect, and relates to a different period. But proceed we now to the profane history itself.

What dealings and intercourse, in the space of these last four hundred years, (*a*) viz. from the building of Solomon's temple to the captivity of Babylon, the Jewish people had with the Philistines, the Ammonites, Moabites, Phœnicians, Syrians, and other neighbouring nations; and what relation and dependance they had on the great and powerful kingdoms of Assyria, Babylon, and Egypt, has in some measure been observed in the course of this History. What we are farther concerned to do, is to take notice of some more remarkable events, which, during this period of time, are supposed to have happened in the world.

(*b*) In the thirty-fifth year of the reign of Uzziah king of Judah, and while there was an interregnum in the kingdom of Israel, the Olympic games were instituted in Greece. The use and design of them was to train up the youth in active and warlike exercises, that, if occasion required, they might be capable of doing their country service in the field: And it was not from the mountain Olympus in Thessaly, but from the city Olympia (since called Pisa, near Elis, a city in Peloponnesus, where they were celebrated in the adjacent plains, near the river Alpheus), that they took their names. Here was the splendid temple of Jupiter, which had vast treasures belonging to it, by reason of the oracles which were there given out, and these games which were there celebrated in honour of that deity; and here was likewise that famous statue of Jupiter*, made by Phidias, which was accounted one of the wonders of the world, and from which he obtained the name of Jupiter Olympius.

It was about four hundred and forty years before this time that these games and exercises were at first instituted by one Hercules; not the son of Jupiter and Alcmena, so much celebrated by the Greek and Latin poets, but one of the priests of Cybele called by that name, who came into Greece from Ida, a mountain in Phrygia, (whence he

(*a*) [According to Hales 476 years from the laying of the foundation, and 469 from the finishing of the temple.]

(*b*) *Bedford's Scripture Chronology*, lib. vi. c. 2.

* This statue of Jupiter is described by Pausanias in the following manner:—"He is made sitting on a throne of gold and ivory, with a crown on his head, which seems to be made of olive-branches. In his right hand he holds an image of victory, made of ivory likewise, that has on its head-dress a crown of massy gold; and in his left a sceptre, made of all kinds of metals mixed together, with an eagle on the top of it. His shoes and stockings are all of gold, and the rest of the drapery is of the same metal, adorned with figures of various animals, and a great number of flower-de-luces. His throne is embellished with ivory, ebony, gold, precious stones, and a multitude of embossed figures. At the four feet, or pedestals of the throne, are four victories, and two others at the feet of the statue. At the two feet, on the fore-side of the throne, on one hand are the figures of sphinxes, who are carrying off some Theban youths; and on the other side are represented the figures of the children of Niobe, whom Apollo and Diana shot to death with their arrows. Between the feet of the throne is represented Theseus and the rest of the heroes who accompanied Hercules to the war against the Ama-

zons, together with several *athletæ* of diverse kinds, and the place is all around adorned with pictures, representing the labours of Hercules, together with several other of the most renowned historical subjects. On the upper part of the throne, on the one side are engraven the Graces, and on the other the hours, because, according to the poets, both these were the daughters of Jupiter. On the footstool of the statue are golden lions, and a representation of the combat of Theseus with the Amazons; and on a basis thereof are innumerable golden figures, such as that of the sun going into his chariot, of Jupiter and Juno, Mercury, Vesta, and Venus, who has Cupid standing by her; of Apollo, Diana, Minerva, Hercules, Amphitrite, Neptune, and the moon, which is here represented sitting upon an horse." This is the substance of what Pausanias says of this famous statue: but notwithstanding that its workmanship was the wonder of all the ancients, and the curiosity of seeing it might increase the number of those who came to the olympic games, yet Strabo finds great fault with it for want of a due proportion, because it was of such a prodigious bigness, that if it had stood upright, it must have made a hole in the roof of the temple. *Bedford's Scripture Chronology*, lib. vi. c. 2. in the Notes.

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and his companions were called Idæii, Dactyli, and Corybantes), and brought in many superstitious rites with them. After the death of this Hercules, these games were discontinued for many years, till, by advice from the oracle of Apollo, Iphitus established them again, even in the lifetime of Lycurges, who is nowhere said to have opposed them*; and so they continued until the time of Constantine the Great, who, upon his profession of the Christian faith, first slighted the Ludi Seculares, and afterwards all other games, as monuments of Pagan superstition; so that falling by degrees into disesteem, in the time of Theodosius the Great, if not before, they were utterly unfrequented and dwindled into nothing.

These games were used to be performed at the end of every four years, (and so every four years made an Olympiad) and lasted for five days; when the youth of Greece contended for mastery in five sorts of exercises, one for each day, viz the cæstus, or whirlebat, the quoit, leaping, wrestling, and racing, either on foot or horseback, or in chariots; all which exercises were thought so honourable, that even kings themselves did not disdain to become competitors for the victory; and accordingly we find Pindar, the most celebrated poet in those days, addressing his first Olympic to Hiero king of Syracuse, for having won the prize in one of the horse-races.

The prize however was not great: It was no more than a garland of palm or olive; but the victor was treated with such tokens of respect and esteem, and was attended by the people with such loud acclamations, while he rode into the city in a coach through a breach in the wall, which upon this occasion was made for his more pompous entrance; and while he was sure to have the best of poets to celebrate his praise, and rank him even among the gods, that to come off conqueror and be crowned in this place, was thought an honour not inferior to that of a triumph in Rome; and this the rather, because the inhabitants of Elis, who were the presidents of these games, were so remarkably impartial in giving sentence according to merit, that whoever was crowned by their order and determination was always thought justly to deserve it.

Thus (a) it appears, that the original use of these Olympic games was to encourage activity of body: But, in process of time, they came to be employed to a quite different purpose, even to fix the chronology of the history of the Greeks, among whom † it grew a custom to reckon by Olympiads; for, before that custom prevailed, their historians were vastly negligent in fixing the date of such transactions as they related. Varro, the most learned person among the Romans, both for history and antiquity, reckons three sorts of times. The 1st, from the beginning of mankind to the first flood, which he calls uncertain, because no account is given of it by any heathen writer. The 2d, from the flood to the first Olympiad, which he calls fabulous, because many strange stories are reported of the gods and demi-gods in those times, but without any method or order. The 3d, from the first Olympiad to his time, which he calls historical, because thenceforward all transactions were laid in their proper places; but before the institution of this method of computation "every thing was confused in the Grecian histo-

* [This is a very confused account of the institution of the Olympiads. The following is perspicuous, and probably correct. "These celebrated games were originally instituted in honour of Jupiter Olympius, by the Phrygian *Pelops*, who settled in the Grecian peninsula, called from him *Peloponnesus*, about B. C. 1350. They were repeated by the *Theban Hercules*, about B. C. 1325, and after a long interruption, restored in part by *Iphitus* king of *Elis*, and celebrated at *Olympia*, on the banks of the river *Alpheus*, B. C. 884, according to the most probable account. However, the vulgar era of the Olympiads

did not commence till 108 years after, July 19, B. C. 776." *Hales's Analysis*, vol. i. p. 243.

(a) *Bedford's Scripture Chronology*, lib. vi. c. 2.

† It is to be observed, however, that it was not from the first Olympiad that they began their computation, but from the XXVII. when *Choræbus*, a native of *Elis*, was victor, because there was no register kept of the preceding Olympiads; and therefore the commencement of this era was an hundred and eight years after the establishment of the games which occasioned it. *Catmet's Dictionary* under the word *Olympiad*.

ry, (as Eusebius (a) tells us), and (b) no one thing written with any tolerable exactness." From 1 Kings viii. to the end of 2 Chron.

In the eleventh year of Jotham †, king of Judah, which was the twelfth of Pekah, king of Israel, another famous era commenced, and was in use throughout all the empire, upon the building of the city of Rome. The history of which is as follows.

After the destruction of Troy (c), Æneas, landing in Italy, was at first opposed by Latinus, king of the Latines, or Aborigines; but being overcome in battle by the Trojans, Latinus made peace with their leader, and permitted him and his men to live independent in his kingdom. Enraged at this treatment, Turnus, king of the Rutuli, fomented a fresh war against Æneas; but in the conclusion he was slain in single combat by the Trojan chief, and his mistress Lavinia (who was the occasion of all this contention) was, by her father Latinus, given to the conqueror for a wife. Æneas (it must be observed) had another son, by a former wife named Creusa, who was lost in the siege of Troy; and after his death, his relict Lavinia, being great with child, and fearing the power of Ascanius (for that was his name), fled into the woods, and was there delivered of a son, who for that reason was called Sylvius, and because he was born after his father's funeral was likewise called Posthumus. It was not long, however, before the people began to express their resentment of this hard usage of Lavinia, so that Ascanius was obliged to recal her; and to avoid all occasions of disagreement for the future, he left to her and her son Sylvius the city of Lavinia, which Æneas had built and called after her name, whilst himself removed to Alba-longa, a city of his own erecting, and where he lived for the remainder of his days, highly delighted with the situation of the place.

After the death of Ascanius, there happened a contention between this Sylvius the son of Æneas and Iulus the son of Ascanius, about the succession to the kingdom; but as the relations of Lavinia had the more prevalent interest in the country, the matter was so compromised, that Iulus was made high priest, and Sylvius king, in whose family the kingdom continued for several generations, and every succeeding prince was named Sylvius.

Of this race was Latinus the second, grandson to Sylvius, who built several towns on the borders of Latium; and their inhabitants, standing much upon the honour of their original, were afterwards called Prisci Latini. Of this race was Tiberinus, who (as some say) was drowned in the Tiber, and from that unhappy accident gave name to the river. Of this race was Aventinus, who, by being buried in the place, gave name to one of the mountains on which Rome was built; and of this race was Procas, who after his death left his two sons, Numitor and Amulius, to reign alternately every year: But Amulius the younger deposed Numitor, slew his son Ægisthus, and, to cut off the whole race, compelled his daughter Ilia to enter into a vow of perpetual virginity, by becoming a priestess to the goddess Vesta. Her vow however did not last long; for a certain soldier found means to get her with child; but to cover the disgrace, a report was raised that all this was done by Mars the god of war. At length she was delivered of two sons, Romulus and Remus, whom their uncle Amulius commanded to be drowned,

(a) *Africanus*, ad *Euseb.* Præparat. Evang. lib. x. c. 10.

(b) *Justin Martyr*, ad Græcos Cohortatio.

† Of the time when this city was built, there are two accounts, the Varronian and the Capitolian. The Varronian places it in the year before, but the Capitolian in this year, and yet they may be both easily reconciled; for as it was customary in those times, when they began to build a city, to go round it with a plough, and make a furrow where the walls were to be built, but leave a void space for the gates; the

year before they might thus mark out the city, dig the foundation of the walls, and provide stones, timber, and other materials, and this year lay the foundation; so that the computation might easily begin from either year, though the Capitolian is the general account. *Bedford's Scripture Chronology*, lib. vi. c. 2. [According to Dr Hales Rome was built in the fourth or fifth year of Jotham, B. C. 753.]

(c) *Sir Walter Raleigh's History*, lib. ii. c. 24, sect. iv.

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610, &c.
p. 540.

and their mother to be buried alive, as being the punishment which the law inflicted when vestal virgins had violated their chastity.

Whether the mother underwent this punishment, or (as some will have it), upon the entreaty of Antho, the daughter of Amulius obtained her pardon; it is certain, that the two children were thrown into the Tiber in order to be drowned: But as the stream was low, and much mud was in the place, a certain woman named Lupa found them before they were dead, and having suckled them for some time (from whence the story of their being nursed by a she-wolf took its rise), brought them at length to Faustulus, the king's shepherd, who recommended them to the care of his wife Laurentia, and so they were both preserved.

As soon as they came to a proper age, they lived at first in the capacity of shepherds; but, being naturally of a brave and martial temper, they applied themselves, not only to the business of hunting wild beasts, but of clearing the country likewise of such gangs of robbers as came to plunder and infest it; so that in a short time the fame of their adventures made multitudes of the neighbouring youth, who were of the like complexion, resort unto them. Enraged at their proceedings, a strong company of these robbers set upon them at a certain time, and, though Romulus defended himself against their attack, took Remus prisoner, and, pretending that he had plundered the estate of his grandfather Numitor, delivered him to king Amulius, who sent him to his brother Numitor to be executed for the fact.

When Remus was brought before Numitor, he behaved with such courage and intrepidity, that he could not but suspect something uncommon in him; and thereupon, hearing that he had another brother, and that they were twins, and comparing their age with the time when his daughter Ilia's two children were exposed, he began to think that these, without doubt, must be the boys whom some good Providence had wonderfully preserved; and being confirmed in his opinion by the information of Faustulus, who had brought them up, he entered into a conspiracy with them against his brother Amulius, wherein it was agreed, that Romulus with his men should privately enter the city, and being joined with such forces as Remus could muster up in Numitor's family, should, all on a sudden, attack the palace and seize the king.

The plot succeeded. Amulius was taken and killed. And after that Numitor had congratulated his grandsons upon their success, he ascended the rostrum, and in a full assembly of people declared how wicked and inhuman his brother Amulius had been; that these were his two grandchildren; how they were born, and bred up, and came to be discovered; and that by their contrivance it was that the tyrant was taken off; whereupon the people immediately came to a resolution, that Numitor should be their king, and that, next under him, Romulus and Remus should be held in the greatest veneration.

As soon as these matters were settled and adjusted, the two young princes (to perpetuate the memory of their preservation) resolved to build a city upon the spot where they had been nourished and brought up; and several of the neighbouring people, as well as their own men, came in to their assistance. It was not much doubted, but that this new city would in process of time outvie all the other towns in Italy; but then, as the two brothers were twins, and it was not well known which was the elder, they agreed to determine, by the flight of birds, who should give the name to the city, and, upon the grandfather Numitor's decease, which of them should reign first.

To this purpose they went each of them to the top of an hill. Romulus ascended what was afterwards called Palatinus, and Remus, Aventinus, from whence he discovered six vultures first; but his brother afterwards saw twelve, so that the dispute was never the nearer an end. Remus laid claim to the sovereignty, because he saw the first vultures, and Romulus because he saw the most; insomuch, that from words proceeding

to blows, Remus was unhappily slain by his brother, and in his death * put an end to the controversy.

From 1 Kings
viii. to the end
of 2 Chron.

When the city was built, Romulus called it *Roma*, which, in the Greek tongue, signified *strength*, and not by his own name *Romula*, because it was a diminutive. As the city, however, when finished, had not a sufficient stock of inhabitants, he found out an expedient to remedy this defect, by making a neighbouring grove an asylum or place of refuge to all malefactors and discontented persons; so that, in a short time, vast numbers of all nations, that could not live in their own country with safety, fled hither for protection, and peopled the city. These inhabitants, however, could last but for one age, because they were most of them men, and, when they desired to marry with their neighbours, were rejected with scorn; so that they were under necessity to get themselves wives by some stratagem or other. To this purpose Romulus proclaimed a feast, and public games, in the honour of Neptune, to be celebrated near his new city; and when the virgins from every quarter came thither to see, and divert themselves, upon a signal given they were all seized by force, carried into the city, and compelled to become wives to those that wanted them. Exasperated with this base treatment, the neighbouring people immediately prepare for war, but are repulsed with loss by the Romans; till the Sabines, who were their most formidable enemy, and principally concerned in the late affront, marched against them, and, under the command of their king Tatius, were just upon giving them a total defeat, when their daughters, who were now become wives to the Romans, ran between the two armies, and, with their hair torn, and all other indications of sorrow, acquainted their parents that they had been used civilly, and that, if matters were carried to such extremities, nothing could be expected on their side but ruin and destruction. Hereupon their parents, being overcome by their prayers, and tears, and arguments, laid aside all angry resentments, and entered into a treaty with their sons-in-law; which succeeded so well, that several of them left their ancient habitations, and came, with all their substance, and lived in Rome. From so small a beginning did this city gradually increase to be the seat of the Western empire, and the mistress of the then known world!

One very remarkable event more, which happened the very next year after the building of Rome, viz. in the twelfth year of Jotham king of Judah, and the thirteenth of Pekah king of Israel, was the dissolution of the Assyrian monarchy, upon the death of Sardanapalus, as several heathen authors have thus related it. This emperor exceeded all his predecessors in sloth and voluptuousness. He clothed himself in woman's attire, he painted his face, and decked his body more like a strumpet than a king; he affected an effeminate voice; spun fine wool and purple among his concubines; and proceeded to such a degree of luxury and shamelessness, that he wrote verses in commemoration of his dissolute manner of life, and commanded after his death to have them inscribed on his tomb.

The kings of the East seldom appeared in public: but Sardanapalus was never seen by any, but such only as were either assistants or associates in his lasciviousness; until Arbaces, the general of the Median forces, bribed one of his eunuchs, by giving him a golden cup, to be introduced into his presence; where, seeing his vile degenerate behaviour, he began to think it a disparagement that so many brave and gallant men should be under the dominion of a worthless wretch, that affected to be a spinster rather than a king. This he communicated to his friends and acquaintance, to the governors of several provinces, but more especially to Belesis, the governor of Babylon, with whom he

* Florus makes the occasion of the death of Remus to be another matter: For having observed that Romulus, by the greater number of the vultures which he saw, had got the better, and built his city with good hopes that it would be remarkable for warlike

affairs, because those birds were accounted birds of prey, ere the walls were raised to any great height his brother Remus made a jest of them; which exasperated the other to that degree, that he ordered him immediately to be slain.

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entered into a close confederacy to depose the present emperor, and to divide his dominions between them, whereof Belesis was to have Babylon, Chaldea, and Arabia, and himself all the rest.

(a) When matters were thus agreed on, Arbaces endeavoured, by all sorts of arts and insinuations, to make himself acceptable to the Medes; to persuade them to invade the Assyrian empire, and (in hopes of regaining their liberty) to draw the Persians into the like confederacy. On the other hand, Belesis prevailed with the Babylonians to revolt, and gained the king of Arabia (with whom he had a very great intimacy) to his party; so that when all their forces were joined together, the army is said to have consisted of four hundred thousand men.

Sardanapalus, seeing such a strong confederacy and combination of arms against him, thought it high time to shake off his sloth; and having drawn forth the forces of the rest of the provinces, he engaged the enemy thrice, and as many times defeated them. In the first action he pursued them to the mountains seventy furlongs beyond Nineveh. In the second, he so defeated them, that they were all upon the point of returning home, had not Belesis (who was a Babylonish priest, and pretended to great skill in astrology * and

(a) *Bedford's* Scripture Chronology, lib. vi. c. 2.

* Whatever skill he might pretend to in astrology, it is certain that he was an excellent astronomer, and when he came to Babylon, and was made emperor there, set himself to rectify the Chaldean year, which seems to have stood unaltered from the flood till that time. The ancient year of the Chaldeans consisted of three hundred and sixty days, or of twelve months with thirty days to each month; but as this was five days and a quarter less than the revolution of the sun to the same point of the equinox, the Egyptians, in the time of Thoth, (their second king, and grandson of Ham) added five days to the year, so that every year consisted exactly of three hundred sixty-five days: but then, in four years there was one day less than in so many Julian years, which in a great length of time, (viz. in 1460 years) made the beginning of the year run through all the seasons. To prevent this inconsistency, the Chaldeans, about every six years, added to their year of 360 days an intercalary month, which made their years unequal; and therefore Belesis, being well acquainted with the Egyptian astronomers, and finding that their year was equal, though not absolutely perfect, reduces the Babylonian year to the same standard, i. e. he makes it consist of three hundred and sixty-five days, which were divided into twelve months, of thirty days each, and five days which were added at the end of the year. But then, because, in each of these years, there would be a redundant quarter of a day, and, in four years one whole day, instead of the bissextile day (as it is in the Julian computation) he began every fourth year a day sooner. This alteration he ordered to begin in the first year of his reign, and from thence it was called the famous era of Nabonassar, (for so Belesis was likewise named) which continued in Egypt to the death of Anthony and Cleopatra, and was afterwards in use among the mathematicians and astronomers, to the time of Ptolemy, who made his canon by this account, which is justly esteemed the surest and most useful guide of ancient chronology, where the sacred historians are silent. *Bedford's*

Scripture Chronology, lib. vi. c. 2. *Whiston's* Theory, lib. ii. and Chronology of the Old Testament, p. 12.

[It is not probable that the Chaldean astronomers, in whose country must have been preserved much of the learning of the antediluvian world, were under the necessity of borrowing any part of their science from the Egyptians, whose ancestors, at their first emigration from Babylonia, must have carried with them from that country the rudiments at least of all their own science. Accordingly the account of the origin of the famous era of *Nabonassar*, which Syncellus has given us, from the earliest writers on Chaldean history and antiquities, differs considerably from this. "*Nabonassar* (says he, as quoted by Dr Hales) having collected the acts of his predecessors, destroyed them, in order that the computation of the reigns of the Chaldean kings might be made from himself." Such was the origin of the era of *Nabonassar*, which that monarch made to begin, with his own reign, on the 26th day of February B. C. 747, and the year employed in it, was the moveable year of twelve equal months of thirty days each, to which were added five supernumerary days. This year, which had been in common use among the *Chaldeans*, *Egyptians*, *Armenians* *Persians*, and other oriental nations, from time immemorial, ran through all the seasons in the course of 1461 years, which was therefore considered as the grand *Nabonassarian period* or *annus magnus* of the Chaldean astronomers, for much the same reason that 4714 has been considered as the grand *Julian period* by the astronomers of modern Europe. Hence, the *astronomical* era of Nabonassar, or *annus magnus* of the Chaldeans, commenced on the 28th day of March, B. C. 867, near 120 years before the *Historic* era; and the king and his counsellors were induced to fix on that year and day for the commencement of their grand or astronomical period, because there was a synchronism of the *new moon* and *vernal equinox* on that day, which was likewise the beginning of the Chaldean year. It is however the historical era that was in common use among chronologers; and its freedom from intercalation rendering

divination) given them assurance, that God would at last reward their labours with success. In the third engagement, Arbaces himself was wounded, and his army routed and pursued as far as the mountains of Babylon; so that the chief officers were for dispersing, and shifting for themselves, when Belesis gave them once more assurance, that if they would but continue together for five days longer, every thing in that time would have a different turn.

From 1 Kings
viii. to the end
of 2 Chron.

With much intreaty was the army prevailed on not to disperse, when suddenly news was brought, that a great inforcement was coming from Bactria to join the king, so that the only game which Arbaces had to play, was to march against them, and by all means imaginable, prevail with them to revolt; wherein he succeeded beyond all mens hopes and expectations, and so gave another turn to the face of affairs.

Sardanapalus, in the mean time, knowing nothing of this, and being elated with his repeated successes, was indulging his sloth and luxury, and preparing beasts for sacrifice, with plenty of wine, and other things necessary to feast and entertain his soldiers; when Arbaces having intelligence by deserters in what condition his army lay, fearless of any foe, and overcome already with surfeiting and drunkenness, broke into their camp by night, and having made a terrible slaughter of most of them, forced the rest into the city.

The king, after this defeat, took upon him the defence of the place, and committed the charge of the army to Salamenus the queen's brother; but Salamenus was worsted in two pitched battles, one in the open field, and the other before the walls of Nineveh, where himself was slain, and most of his men cut to pieces; so that all the resource which Sardanapalus had, was to sustain the siege as long as he could, until the succours (which he had sent for out of all his provinces) should come to his assistance: and this he had some hopes of being able to do, because there was an ancient prophecy, that "Nineveh never could be taken by force until the river became its enemy."

Arbaces, on the other hand, was much encouraged by his successes, and carried on the siege with the utmost vigour; but the prodigious strength of the walls, which were an hundred feet high, and so very broad that three chariots might go a-breast upon them, and the vast plenty of all manner of stores and provisions necessary for a long defence, hindered him from making any considerable progress.

Thus two years were spent without any prospect of relief on the one side, or of taking the town on the other. In the third year, a continued fall of rains made Tygris overflow to such a degree, that, coming into the city, it tore along with it twenty fathoms of the wall; which Sardanapalus concluding to be the accomplishment of the oracle, because by this means the river was apparently become an enemy to the city, he grew quite dispirited, and gave up all for lost. However, to prevent his falling into the hands of the enemy, he caused a large pile of wood * to be made in the court of his palace, and there heaped together all his gold, silver, and royal apparel, and having enclosed his eunuchs and concubines in the midst of it, ordered it to be set on fire, and so burnt himself and them together. The only action wherein (a) those historians, who make no mention of his victories, represent him as a valiant man! Arbaces, being

it peculiarly convenient for astronomical calculations, it was adopted by the early Greek astronomers *Timarchus* and *Hipparchus*, and by *Ptolemy* and others of the Alexandrian school in Egypt. *Hales's Analysis*, vol. i. p. 268, &c.]

* Concerning this pile, *Athenæus* informs us that it was four hundred feet high, upon which he placed 150 golden beds, and as many golden tables; that he had thrown into it some millions of talents of gold and silver, besides the richest furniture of purple, and the

finest garments; and that this pile was fifteen days in burning. To which *Diodorus* adds, that *Belesis*, by craft, obtained leave of Arbaces to carry off the ashes, under pretence of building an altar with them at Babylon, by which means he gained an immense treasure. But all this looks more like a romance than a true history. *Bedford's Scripture Chronology*, lib. vi. c. 2. in the Notes.

(a) *Justin*, lib. i. and *Athenæus*, lib. xii. c. 12.

A. M. 3394, informed of this, marched his army through the breach of the wall, and took the city. &c. or 4825. After this he rewarded his followers according to their merit; made Belesis governor Ant. Chris. of Babylonia, Chaldea, and Arabia, according to their compact, and took the rest of the empire to himself; which put an end to the Assyrian monarchy, after it had governed 610, &c. all Asia (a) above thirteen hundred years, * and (according to the vision which Daniel (b) had of it) in its conquests had been as swift as an eagle, but now its wings were plucked.

APPENDIX TO DISSERTATION V.

[THE intricacy of the Scriptural chronology from the revolt of the ten tribes to the destruction of Jerusalem, and more especially to the taking of Samaria, has been complained of by every writer on the subject. Dr Hales, whose *Sacred* chronology at least is to me the most perspicuous and satisfactory of any that I have seen, observes, that the difficulty of harmonising the reigns of the kings of Judah and Israel together has principally arisen from two circumstances. Of these the first is the discordance of some of the correspondences in the years of their respective reigns, with the direct length of those reigns themselves; and the second is the not having critically determined the duration of the two *interregnums* in the succession of the latter kings, so as to make them correspond with the former throughout. As I have uniformly placed his dates of the most important events below those of our author, it may be satisfactory to the reader to find here the principles on which this eminent chronologer has adjusted and harmonised the whole, and to find them stated as nearly as possible in his own words.

1. In the first place, he considers the standard of the reigns of the kings of Judah as correct; and for this good reason—that it is verified by the concurrence of the books of *Kings* and *Chronicles* (the latter relating chiefly to the kings of Judah), and of *Josephus*, *Abulfaragi*, and *Eutychius* *². The incorrectness therefore complained of, must be confined to the latter series, and remedied by reducing it to the former. But the two series of reigns agree in three points of time; for, 1. the reigns of *Rehoboam* and *Jeroboam* began together, or at least in the same year; (c) as did also, 2. the reigns of queen *Athaliah* and *Jehu* respectively over *Judah* and *Israel*; (d) and, 3. *Samaria* was taken by the *Assyrians* in the ninth year of *Hoshea* king of *Israel*, and in the sixth year of *Hezekiah* king of *Judah* (e).

Hence it necessarily follows, 1. That the *six* first reigns in *Judah* must have been equal in length to the *eight* first reigns in *Israel*; and, 2. That the next seven in *Judah* to the sixth of *Hezekiah*, including one *interregnum*, must be equal to the remainder in *Israel*, including two *interregnums*. But upon comparing the *former* together, it appears that the first six of *Judah* amount to ninety-five years, whereas the first eight of *Is-*

(a) *Justin*, lib. i.

* [The number of years in which the supreme power in Nineveh was possessed by the Assyrian dynasty, properly so called, seems not to have been quite one thousand; nor did the greater number of these sovereigns by any means govern all Asia.] See *Hales*, vol. iii.

(b) *Dan.* vii. 4.

*² The work of *Eutychius*, to which the author refers, is entitled *Annales ab Orbe condito ad annum usque* 940, of which the learned and accurate Cave says,

“In his occurrent plura notatu dignissima, quæ frustra alibi quærantur: certe plurima anilibus fabulis simillima, quæ, si non ex proprio cerebello finxerit, saltem ex futilibus ecclesiæ suæ monumentis hausit.” To a work of this kind little credit is due; but it certainly adds something, however little, to the testimony of *Josephus* and *Abulfaragi*, both writers of great respectability.

(c) 1 Kings xii. 1—20. 2 Chron. x. 1—19.

(d) 2 Kings ix. 24—27.

(e) 2 Kings xviii. 10.

rael amount to ninety-eight years, according to the table of reigns at present in Scripture. Consequently three years must be retrenched from the latter, to reduce them to an equality with the former.

From 1 Kings
viii. to the end
of 2 Chron.

Accordingly, in the tables of this accurate chronologer, one year is subtracted from each of the reigns of *Baasha*, *Ela*, and *Zimri*, which are thereby reduced from *current* to *complete* years; and this is warranted by the correspondences. For *Baasha* began to reign in the third year of *Asa* king of *Judah*, (a) and his son *Ela* in the 26th of *Asa*, (b) which gives the reign of *Baasha*, $26-3=23$ years complete. *Ela* was slain in the twenty-seventh of *Asa* (c), and therefore reigned only $27-26=1$ year complete. *Zimri* and *Omri* reigned in succession, from the twenty-seventh to the thirty-eighth of *Asa* (d), or only $38-27=11$ years complete. And as their reigns were all included in the one reign of *Asa*, and therefore more likely to be correctly referred thereto, this is a reason, why these three reigns should be selected for reduction rather than the succeeding or the preceding. But upon comparing together the *latter* series of reigns in these two kingdoms, it appears that there was one interregnum in the kingdom of *Judah*, of eleven years; and two in *Israel*—the first of twenty-two, and the second of ten years; which are requisite in both, to equalise the two periods of 176 years each, from the joint accession of queen *Athaliah* and *Jehu*, to the sixth of *Hezekiah*, and the capture of *Samaria*.

“That the lengths of these interregnums are rightly assigned, will appear from the correspondences of reigns. For

1. *Amaziah*, king of *Judah*, survived the death of *Jehoash*, king of *Israel*, fifteen years. He died, therefore, about the sixteenth year of *Jeroboam* II. the son of *Jehoash* (e); but *Azariah* or *Uzziah* did not begin to reign until the twenty-seventh year of *Jeroboam* II. (f); whence it follows that from the death of *Amaziah* to the accession of his son *Uzziah*, there was an interregnum of $27-16=11$ years.

2. *Jeroboam* II. began to reign in the fifteenth year of *Amaziah*, king of *Judah*, and reigned forty-one years (g). He died, therefore, in the sixteenth year of *Uzziah*, king of *Judah*; but *Zechariah*, his son, did not succeed him till the thirty-eighth of *Uzziah* (h); consequently, the first interregnum in *Israel* lasted $38-16=22$ years.

3. *Pekah*, king of *Israel*, began to reign in the fifty-second year of *Uzziah* (i), and in the twentieth year of his reign he was slain by *Hoshea*, in the third year of *Ahaz*, king of *Judah* (k), but *Hoshea* did not begin to reign till the twelfth year of *Ahaz*, or the thirteenth current (l); consequently the second interregnum in *Israel* lasted $13-3=10$ years.”

“A curious and satisfactory confirmation of this adjustment of the reigns of the kings of *Israel* is furnished by *Josephus*, who reckons (m) their amount, from the revolt of the ten tribes, to the extinction of that kingdom, 240 years; and if from the whole corrected amount 271 years, we deduct the two interregnums 32 years—the remainder 239 years complete, or 240 years current, gives the length of the reigns alone.—We are now competent, continues Dr Hales, to detect some errors that have crept into the correspondences of reigns, and hitherto puzzled and perplexed chronologers, preventing them from critically harmonizing the two series.

1. “*Jehoshaphat* begin to reign over *Judah* in the *fourth* year of *Ahab* (n).”—It should be the *second*.

2. “*Ahaziah*, the son of *Ahab*, began to reign over *Israel* in the *seventeenth* year of *Jehoshaphat* (o).”—It should be the *twentieth* of *Jehoshaphat*.

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|----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| (a) 1 Kings xv. 33. | (b) Ibid. xvi. 8. | (c) Ibid. xvi. 10. | (d) Ibid. xvi. 29. |
| (e) 2 Kings xiv. 17. | 2 Chron. xxv. 25. | (f) 2 Kings xv. 1. | 2 Chron. xxvi. 1. |
| xiv. 23. | (h) Ibid. xv. 8. | (i) 2 Kings xv. 27. | 2 Chron. xxvi. 3. |
| xv. 30. | (l) 2 Kings xvii. 1. | (m) Antiq. ix. 14. 1. | (n) 1 Kings |
| xxi. 41. | (o) 1 Kings xxii. 51. | | |

A. M. 3394,
&c. or 4825.
Ant. Chris.
610, &c.
or 586.

3. “*Jehoram*, the son of *Ahaziah*, began to reign over *Israel* in the second year of *Jehoram*, son of *Jehoshaphat* (a).”—It should be in the *twenty-second* year of *Jehoshaphat*; as also where it is again incorrectly stated (b), to have been in the *eighteenth* of *Jehoshaphat*.

4. “*Jehoram*, the son of *Jehoshaphat*, began to reign over *Judah* in the *fifth* year of *Joram*, the grandson of *Ahab* (c).”—It should be either in the *fifth* year from the death of *Ahab*; or in the third year of *Joram*’s reign. The clause “*Jehoshaphat* being then king of *Judah*” our author deems an *anachronism*, and an interpolation in the Masoretic text; though others have endeavoured, I think unsuccessfully, to vindicate its authenticity by supposing that *Jehoram*, the son of *Jehoshaphat*, shared the sovereignty some years with his father.

5. “*Jehoash* began to reign over *Israel* in the *thirty-seventh* year of *Joash* king of *Judah* (d).”—It should be the *thirty-ninth* year; as in the accurate Aldine edition of the Septuagint. See *Jackson’s Chronology*, vol. i. p. 182.

6. “The correspondences by which the interregnum in *Judah* was collected, are incorrect; they should be 25—14=11 years.

7. “*Hoshea* is said (e) to have slain *Pekah*, king of *Israel*, in the *twentieth* year of *Jotham*; but *Jotham* reigned only *sixteen* years (f). It was therefore in the *third* of *Ahaz* that *Pekah* was slain, as may be collected from the first verse of the sixteenth chapter of the same book.”] *Hales’s Analysis*, &c. vol. ii. p. 408, &c.

(a) 2 Kings i. 17.
(e) Ibid. xv. 30.

(b) 2 Kings iii. 1.
(f) Ibid. xv. 33.

(c) Ibid. viii. 16.

(d) Ibid. xiii. 10.

THE END OF THE SIXTH BOOK

THE HISTORY

OF THE

BIBLE.

BOOK VII.

CONTAINING AN ACCOUNT OF THINGS FROM THE BABYLONISH CAPTIVITY TO THE BIRTH OF CHRIST, IN ALL 588 YEARS,—ACCORDING TO DR HALES 586.

CHAPTER I.

FROM THE CAPTIVITY TO THE DEATH OF CYRUS.

THE HISTORY.

3417. **A**FTER the return of Nebuchadnezzar and his victorious army to Babylon, all those Jews who for fear of him had taken refuge among neighbouring nations, or had hid themselves in the fields and deserts of their own country, hearing that Gedaliah was made governor of the land, resorted to him at Mizpah †, where he set up his residence. From Jer. xl. 7. to xlv. all Daniel, and from Ezra i. to v.

4825. † In the history of Jacob we read, that after a stay of several years at Haran, making his escape from thence, he was overtook by Laban, his father-in-law, in a mountainous tract, which was afterwards called Gilead, i. e. an heap of stones, as also Mispah, i. e. a watch-tower, because at the covenant which was made between Laban and him an heap of stones was

gathered to remain a monument of it, and upon that occasion Laban's expressions are these—"The Lord watch between me and thee, when we are absent one from another. If thou wilt afflict my daughters, or if thou wilt take other wives besides my daughters, no man is with us; see, God is witness between me and thee," Gen. xxxi. 49, 50. From that time the

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&c. or 4825.
Ant. Chris.
587, &c.
or 586.

Among these were Johanan and Jonathan, the sons of Kereah, and Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, with diverse others: But Ishmael came to him out of a treacherous intent only; for being of the blood-royal, he reckoned to make himself king of Judea, now that the Chaldeans were gone; and to that purpose had formed a conspiracy to kill Gedaliah and seize on the government, wherein Baalis †, king of the Ammonites, was confederate with him.

His design however was not carried on so secretly but that Johanan, the son of Kereah, got notice of it, and acquainted the governor with it: But he being a man of a generous temper, and not apt to entertain jealousies of others, took no notice of Johanan's information, but continued the same friendly correspondence with Ishmael that he had ever done. This gave the traitor an advantage against him; for pretending to pay him a visit one day, he and his confederates (at a time when the people were gone out to harvest-work) fell upon him and slew him, even while he was entertaining them at his table. With him he murdered all the Jews and Chaldeans that were at Mizpah, except some few whom he made captives; and having kept the matter private, the next day but one he destroyed fourscore Israelites, who were coming in a mournful manner * with their oblations into the town, and there put them all to the sword, except ten, who, for the redemption of their lives, offered him all the *² treasures they had in the field.

After this massacre, Ishmael, not thinking himself safe in Mizpah, took the captives with him (among whom were king Zedekiah's daughters), and was making the best of his way to the king of the Ammonites, when Johanan, and the rest of the captains of Judah, hearing of this detestable deed, made after him with what forces they could get together: But when he perceived them coming, he left all his train behind him, and with only eight men made his escape into the land of Ammon.

place whereat his covenant was made, and where, probably in memory of it, a city in after-ages was built, was called Mizpah. It was situate on the east side of the river Jordan, and in the division of the land fell to the tribe of Dan; and here it was that Gedaliah chose to fix his habitation, or perhaps was ordered to fix it here, because it lay nearest of any to Babylon, from whence he was to receive his instructions as to the administration of the government. *Wells's Geography of the Old Testament*, vol. i.

† That Ishmael, who was of the blood-royal of Judah, should attempt to take away the life of Gedaliah is no wonder at all. His envy of the other's promotion, and his ambition to make himself a king, might be strong incitements to what he did; but why Baalis should have any hand in so black a design, we can hardly imagine any other reason than the ancient and inveterate hatred which the Ammonites always had against the Hebrews; and therefore this king of theirs, seeing that the Jewish nation was at this time in a manner brought to nothing, was minded to take revenge for all the injuries that his ancestors had received from them, and to give the finishing stroke to their ruin, by cutting off their governor, and so dispersing all the remains of that unhappy people which was now gathered together at Mizpah. But whatever their views might be, it is certain that they put their design in speedy execution; for the murder of Gedaliah happened but two months after the destruction of the city and temple of Jerusalem, viz. in the seventh month (which is Tisri, and answers in part to our September and October), and on the thirtieth

day of the month: For that day the Jews have kept as a fast, in commemoration of this calamity (which indeed was the completion of their ruin) ever since. *Calmet's Commentary on Jer. xl. 14.* and *Prideaux's Connection*, anno 588.

* The tokens of their mourning are said to be,—“That they had their beards shaven, and their clothes rent, and that they had cut themselves,” Jer. xli. 5. For though it was an express prohibition in the law, “Ye shall not make any cuttings in your flesh for the dead, nor print any marks upon you,” Lev. xix. 28. yet this seems to relate only to such practices when they became superstitious and were done in honour to false gods; for in cases of ordinary mourning for the dead, or for any other grievous disaster, the words of the prophet seem to imply as if they had been permitted in common use: “Both the great and the small shall die in the land: They shall not be buried, neither shall men lament for them, nor cut themselves, nor make themselves bald for them, neither shall men tear themselves in mourning to comfort them for the dead,” Jer. xvi. 6, 7.

*² Treasures (according to the common phrase of Scripture) signify any thing that is hid or kept in reserve, whether it be gold, silver, corn, wine, oil, apparel, or any other thing: And among the people of the East it was an usual thing to bury their corn and other provisions in deep holes and caverns, which they dug and filled up so very dexterously, that no one could perceive that the earth had been moved, nor could any find them out but those who made them. *Calmet's Commentary*.

Johanan and the rest of the captains being thus left with all the people, and now reflecting on what Ishmael had done to Gedaliah, began to be apprehensive that the Chaldeans might possibly revenge his death upon them; and therefore, for fear of the worst, they retired to Chimham †, not far from Bethlehem, that in case they were called to an account they might more readily make their escape into Egypt.

From Jer. xl. 7. to xlv. all Daniel, and from Ezra i. to v.

Jeremiah, from the time that he parted with Nebuzaradan, had taken up his abode with Gadaliah the governor; but after his death, among the rest of the captives was carried from thence by Ishmael the Conspirator, and now, upon his defeat, accompanied Johanan, and the rest of his countrymen, to their new habitation at Chimham. Here they had not been long before Johanan, and the other princes of the people, came to request of him that he would consult the Lord concerning their intended journey into Egypt, with warm professions however of a ready compliance with whatever he should think fit to enjoin them. The prophet did so: And in ten days time returned them this answer from God:—"That, if they would tarry in Judea, and live peaceably under the king of Babylon, he would screen them from their present danger, and incline the heart of their conqueror to be favourable to them; but that if they persisted in their intention of going into Egypt, he would infallibly cause every thing they dreaded,—the sword, the famine, and the pestilence, to pursue them." But notwithstanding both their own professions and the prophet's declarations, (wherein they †² blamed Baruch as being accessory) they were resolutely bent upon going into Egypt; and accordingly, taking all the remnant of Judah, men, women, and children, the king's daughters, Jeremiah the prophet, and Baruch his scribe, with them, they went and settled in the country until the judgments, wherewith God had threatened their disobedience, came upon them.

The Jews †³ were no sooner settled in Egypt than they gave themselves wholly up to idolatry, worshipping the queen †⁴ of heaven, and the other false deities of the land, whereupon Jeremiah made loud remonstrances; but all the effect which they had upon them, was only to make them more obstinate in their impiety: so that the prophet was obliged to denounce God's severest judgments against them in express terms, and, at the same time, to foretel, that the king of Egypt (under whose protection they lived se-

† This place may be supposed, from 2 Sam. xix. 38. to have been anciently given by king David to Chimham, the son of old Barzillai the Gileadite, and which at this time bore his name, though near five hundred years after the first donation. It was in the neighbourhood of Bethlehem, about two leagues from Jerusalem, and hither the poor people betook themselves, because it was at a much farther distance from Babylon than Mizpah, and in their straight way to Egypt, in case they should determine to go thither, as they seemed inclinable to do, because there they supposed they should "have no war, nor hear the sound of the trumpet, nor have hunger of bread," Jeremiah xlii. 14.

†² The words in the text are,—“The Lord our God hath not sent thee to say, Go not into Egypt to sojourn there; but Baruch, the son of Neriah, setteth thee on against us, for to deliver us into the hands of the Chaldeans, that they may put us to death, and carry us away captives into Babylon,” Jer. xliii. 2, 3. But what foundation the people should have for this their accusation against Baruch it is no easy matter to conceive; only we may suppose, that as Baruch was preserved and taken care of by the Chaldeans as well as his master, and was equally a-

gainst maintaining the siege of Jerusalem when Nebuchadnezzar came before it; and that, as he had been some time at Babylon himself, (Vid. Baruch i. 1. 3.) and was probably not so virulent in his speeches against the Chaldeans as the other Jews were; this, to a blind and mutinous mob, was reason enough to suspect him of being engaged in the enemy's party. *Calmet's Commentary.*

†³ The places in which the Jews are said to have settled themselves in Egypt, were Migdol, Tahpanhes, Noph, and the country of Pathros, Jer. xlv. 1. Migdol is the same place in Egypt which Moses makes mention of, Exod. xiv. 2. over-against Baal-zephon, not far from the Red Sea. Tahpanhes is Daphne, not far from Pelusium, the first city in Egypt, in the road from Judea, and as it were its key. Noph is Memphis, situate above the parting of the Nile, or where the Delta begins, and not a little famous for its pyramids; and the country of Pathros is the same with Thebais or the Upper Egypt, so called from the city Thebes, which was the first capital of it.

†⁴ By which is meant the moon, at least, if not all the planets; for what we render *queen*, in the marginal note is called the *frame of heaven*.

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cure, as they thought) should be delivered into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar †, God's agent for that purpose, in like manner as Zedekiah was; which, in the space of eighteen years afterwards accordingly came to pass.

After this we have no more of the prophet Jeremiah *, and very little of his contemporary Ezekiel *². They both, no doubt, continued in the prophetic office until their death; but when, and where that happened, or by whose means it was occasioned, the Scripture is silent, and tradition is uncertain. This however we may learn from their own writings, that after they had discharged their duty to their own people the Jews, they were directed by God to address the rest of their predictions chiefly to the Gentiles. Accordingly we find Jeremiah prophesying against Egypt in the xlviith chapter; against all the Philistines in the xlviiith; against the Moabites in the xlviiiith; against Ammon, Edom, and other people, in the xlixth; and against Babylon in the lth and list; with some promises here and there interspersed concerning the redemption of Israel. In like manner we find Ezekiel prophesying against the Ammonites in the xxvth chapter; against the Tyrians, and those that traded with them, in the xxvith and xxviith; against the prince of Tyre, in the xxviiiith; against Egypt, in the xxixth, xxxth, xxxist, and xxxiid; against the shepherds of Israel in the xxxivth; against the Edomites in the xxxvth; and against the enemies of the church of God, under the name of Gog and Magog, in the xxxviiiith and xxxixth; with promises of a restoration (especially in the xxxvith and xxxviith) to his captive countrymen, and a long description of the rebuilding of the temple and city (wherewith he concludes) as a sure confirmation of it.

Daniel, who was descended from the royal family of David, was in the first captivity of Judah (which happened under king Jehoiakim), together with his friends Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, carried to Babylon, when he was as yet but a youth. The

† It is very observable, that in several places of Jeremiah's prophecy (viz. chap. xxv. 9. chap. xxvii. 6. and chap. xliii. 10.) Nebuchadnezzar is called God's servant, on purpose to shew us, that as great a prince as he was, he was no more than the executioner of his commands; that he was the general of his troops, and that all the victories he gained, and the conquests he won, were by his direction and appointment; for no writers speak with so much deference of God as do the prophets, because they only knew, by the inspiration of the Divine Spirit, to express, with a proper dignity, what the greatest monarchs are in comparison with the Divine Majesty. *Calmet's Commentary.*

* St Jerom (in the life of this prophet) and Dorotheus (in his synopsis of the lives and deaths of the prophets and apostles) tell us, that he was stoned to death in Egypt by his own renegado countrymen, the Jews, for preaching against their idolatry; and of this some interpret St Paul's *ἐλιθάσθησαν, they were stoned*, Heb. xi. 37. It appears indeed by the account we have of their behaviour, Jer. xlv. 16. that they were bent both against him and his reproofs; and therefore it was the more likely that they were the authors of his death, than (as some say) the Egyptians were, for his prophesying against them and their king Pharaoh-Hophra. For the Egyptians (according to the same tradition) having, by the prophet's prayers, been freed from the crocodiles, which very much infested them, had him in such great honour and esteem, that in testimony thereof they buried him in one of their royal sepulchres. The truth is, Jeremiah was all his

lifetime exposed to the ill treatment of the Jews, whose irregularities and sad apostacy he was always reproofing; and therefore the author of the book of Ecclesiasticus, in the encomium which he gives of this prophet, seems to draw his character from the persecutions he endured; "They entreated him evil, who nevertheless was a prophet sanctified in his mother's womb," *Ecclus. xlix. 7.*

*² St Jerom, in his life of this prophet, tells us, that he was put to death by a prince of the children of Israel, whom he reproved for his idolatry; but who this prince of the Jewish nation should be, upon the river Chebar, where Ezekiel, in the time of his captivity, lived, it is difficult to tell. He was buried, as some say, in the same cave wherein Shem and Arphaxad were deposited, upon the banks of the Euphrates; but Benjamin of Tudela (in his travels) tells us, that at some leagues from Bagdat he saw a magnificent mausolæum, which was said to be this prophet's tomb, upon the top of which there was a famous library, wherein, as they say, was the original of the prophet's predictions, written with his own hand; that, in the prophet's tomb, there is a lamp continually burning, maintained at the expence of the head of the captivity of Bagdat; that every year this tomb is frequented by the several heads of the captivity, who resort thither with a numerous retinue; and that not only the Jews but the Persians, Medes, and many of the mussulmen, made this a place of devotion, and came thither to make their presents, and perform their vows. *Calmet's Dictionary*, under the word *Ezekiel*.

custom among conquerors then was to change the names of their captives (especially when they were to serve in any capacity about the court); and therefore, by the order of Aspenaz, † master of the eunuchs, Daniel †² was called *Belteshazzar*, Hananiah *Shadrach*, Mishael *Meshach*, and Azariah *Abednego*.

From Jer. xl. 7. to xlv. all Daniel, and from Ezra i. to v.

For three years they were instructed in all the learning of the Chaldeans, and had a daily allowance of meat and wine from the king's table; but Daniel, who was a devout observer of the religion of his country, desired of the chief eunuch, that they might be excused from that, and have only a sufficient quantity of water and pulse allowed them, which accordingly was granted; and by the time that they had finished their studies, they were found to excel, in the several parts of learning there in vogue, all the magicians in the country; †³ and especially Daniel was become very famous for his singular skill in the knowledge and interpretation of dreams.

It so happened one night, that king Nebuchadnezzar had a dream which left strong impressions upon his spirits; but the thing which made him uneasy was, that he could not recollect the substance of it. To assist his memory in this respect, he summoned all his wise men together (those especially that pretended to divination), demanding of them what his dream was; but when they endeavoured to excuse themselves upon the presumed impossibility of the thing, he fell into such a passion, that he ordered all who professed magic †⁴ in his dominions to be instantly put to death.

† What we render "master of the eunuchs," may very likely signify "the chief minister of Nebuchadnezzar's court." Such officers, in the palaces of eastern princes, were usually called eunuchs; because they who had the controul of the king's household (as we say) were ordinarily such, though many times it might be otherwise. The Jews have a notion, that Daniel and his three companions were, by the order of Nebuchadnezzar, made eunuchs, that the prophecy of Isaiah might be fulfilled, "Thy sons, that shall issue from thee, shall they take away, and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon," chap. xxxix. 7. But that is no conclusive reason; because, in that prophecy, as well as in the passage we are now upon, the name of eunuch might mean no more than any person who had an employment at court. *Calmet's Commentary*.

†² It is very remarkable, that as all their former names related to the true God, so all the names which, on this occasion, were imposed upon these four Jewish youths, had some reference or other to Babylonish idols. Daniel, in Hebrew, signifies *God is my Judge*; Belteshazzar, in Chaldee, is, *the treasure of Baal*; Hananiah, in Hebrew, is, *well-pleasing to God*; Shadrach, in Chaldee, *the inspiration of the sun*; Mishael, in Hebrew, *proceeding from God*; Meshach, in Chaldee, *belonging to the goddess Sheshach*; Azariah, in Hebrew, *God is my help*; and Abednego, in Chaldee, *the servant of Nago*, i. e. the sun or the morning-star, both deities among the Babylonians, and so called because of their brightness. *Calmet's Commentary* on Dan. i. 7.

†³ The prophet Daniel makes great mention of these sort of people, and ranks them under these four different kinds:—The *Chartumim*, the *Asaphim*, the *Mecasphim*, and the *Chasdim*, chap. ii. 2. *Chartumim*, according to the Septuagint, signifies *sophists*; but, according to St Jerom, *diviners, fortune-tellers, casters of nativity*, &c. *Asaphim* has no derivation

from the Chaldee tongue, but no small resemblance to the Greek word σοφῖς, (whether the Greeks took this word from the Babylonians, or the Babylonians from them) and therefore the Septuagint have rendered it by *philosophers*. *Mecasphim* is thought by some to be *necromancers*, such as pretended to raise the dead to gain intelligence of things future; but the Septuagint have rendered it by a word that denotes such enchanters as made use of noxious herbs and drugs, the blood of victims, and the bones of the dead, for their superstitious operations. The other word, *Chasdim*, is the same with *Chaldeans*, and here signifies a sort of *philosophers* among the Babylonians, who dwelt in a separate part of the city, and were exempt from all public offices and employments. Their study was natural philosophy, astrology, divination, or the foretelling of future events by the observation of the stars, the interpretation of dreams, the science of auguries, the worship of their gods, &c. as Diodorus Siculus, lib. i. gives us an account of them. *Calmet's Dictionary* under the word *Magicians*.

†⁴ Magic is properly of three kinds, natural, artificial, and diabolical. The first of these is no other than natural philosophy, but highly improved and advanced; whereby the person that is well skilled in the power and operation of natural bodies, is able to produce many wonderful effects, mistaken by the illiterate for diabolical performances, but such as lie perfectly within the verge of nature. Artificial magic is what we call legerdemain, or slight of hand, (the merry tricks of jugglers, as we corrupt the *joculatores*) far from exceeding the power of art, though many times they pass with the vulgar for diabolical likewise. Diabolical magic is that which is done by the help of the devil, who, having great skill in natural causes, may assist those that are in league and covenant with him, to do many strange and astonishing things. It seems, however, by the discourse which passed between Nebuchadnezzar and his magicians,

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Under this denomination and sentence were Daniel and his three friends included ; and therefore, understanding the reason of this sudden decree, Daniel applied himself to Arioch, captain of the guard, desiring a short respite of its execution, in which time he did not in the least doubt but to give the king full satisfaction, both as to his dream † and the interpretation of it : And so proceeding to his three friends, he acquainted them with what he had undertaken, and desired their joint prayer to God, that he would be pleased to reveal this great and important secret to him ; which accordingly was done that very night.

The next morning, after he had returned praise and thanksgiving to God for this singular vouchsafement, he repaired to the palace, and, being introduced by the captain of the guard, was asked by the king if he had found out his dream ? “ You saw, * says he, O king, an image of a vast dimension, †² excellent in brightness, but terrible in aspect. The head of this image was of fine gold, the breast and arms of silver, the belly and thighs of brass, the legs of iron, and the feet, partly iron and partly clay. You saw likewise, O king, a stone cut out of the mountain, but from whence it came you knew not. This stone, falling upon the feet of the image, brake them into pieces, and then the rest of the image mouldered into dust, which the wind dispersed, so that it was no more to be seen ; but the stone, which in this manner destroyed the image, increased to a great mountain, and filled the earth. This, O king, was the dream : And the interpretation †³ of it is this.—You, who are supreme above other kings, and to

that they had no knowledge in the sciences they pretended to ; that the king himself looked upon them as no better than a pack of impostors ; and that they had no familiarity with any wicked demons, who might have helped them out at this dead lift ; otherwise they would not have told the king—“ It is a rare thing which the king requireth, and there is none other that can shew it before the king except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh,” Dan. ii. 11. Vide *Edwards's Body of Divinity*, vol. i.

† Some are of opinion, that Nebuchadnezzar's dream, and the interpretation thereof, were both revealed to Daniel while he was asleep ; but others rather think, that it was in a vision while he was awake, because the prayer and thanksgiving which he made to God seem to insinuate that he was awake ; though we cannot see why he might not receive the revelation in his sleep, and return God thanks for it as soon as he awoke. *Calmet's Commentary*.

* Josephus introduces Daniel as making this preamble to his discovery and explanation of the king's dream : “ It is not any high conceit of my own wisdom, as if I understand more than the Chaldeans do, or any designed reproach upon them for not being able to resolve a question which I am able to unriddle, that I engage in this matter ; for I am not a person that pretends to more skill and knowledge than my neighbours ; but it is purely the work of God, in pity to the miserable, and in mercy to my prayers, for the life and safety of myself and my friends, that has now laid open this dream to me, and explained the meaning of it. Nor have I been so solicitous for the safety of myself and my companions under your displeasure, as for your honour and glory, lest you should tarnish them, by putting to death (contrary to all right and justice) so many worthy men, merely because they were not able to do a thing that is impossible for flesh and blood to perform.” *Jewish Antiq.*

lib. 10. c. 11. This is to be observed, however, that though a great part of the book of Daniel be in Hebrew, yet this speech of his to the king, as well as the dialogue which passed between the king and the magicians ; the king's decree, wherein he orders the golden statue to be worshipped ; and that other, wherein he declares his dream of the vast large tree which Daniel expounded ; the history of the feast which Belshazzar made ; of his profanation of the sacred vessels, and the terrible vision of the hand-writing which he saw upon the wall ; the beginning of the reign of Darius ; the honours he conferred on Daniel, and the vision of the four beasts, denoting the four monarchies ;—that all these, I say, (viz. from the 4th verse of the 2d chapter to the beginning of the 8th chapter) are wrote in the Chaldee or Syriac language, which at that time were both the same, and both as familiar to our prophet as was his mother-tongue. *Calmet's Commentary* on Dan. ii. 4.

†² Grotius accurately observes, that the image appeared with a glorious lustre in the imagination of Nebuchadnezzar, whose mind was wholly taken up with the admiration of worldly pomp and splendour ; whereas the same monarchies were represented to Daniel under the shape of fierce and wild beasts, (ch. vii.) as being the great supporters of idolatry and tyranny in the world. *Louth's Comment.* on Dan. ii.

†³ By these different emblems of metals and stone, God intended to signify to Nebuchadnezzar the several empires that were to be in the world. The Assyrian or Chaldean is represented by *gold*, because it was the first and the most magnificent, if not the most extensive, and Nebuchadnezzar, being then upon the throne, is said to be head of it. That of *silver* is the Persian, founded by Cyrus upon the ruins of the Chaldean, but inferior to the Chaldean in its duration at least, if not in its extent. That of *brass* is the Grecian, founded by Alexander upon the ruins of the

whom the God of heaven hath given power, and strength, and glory, are signified by this head of gold. After you another kingdom shall arise, but as inferior to yours as silver is to gold. After that there shall arise a third kingdom, emblemed by brass, which shall govern the earth; but the fourth kingdom shall be as strong as iron, and vanquish all the rest. And whereas the feet were partly iron and partly clay, this kingdom shall be divided; part of it shall be strong and part of it weak, as clay and iron cannot be solidly mixed together; but in the times of these empires, the God of heaven shall set up another kingdom (signified by the stone), which shall prevail above all, and itself never be destroyed, &c.”

From Jer. xl.
7. to xlv. all
Daniel, and
from Ezra i.
to v.

Surprised at this wonderful discovery, the king fell prostrate before Daniel, † and was ready to pay him Divine honours. He loaded him, however, with presents and rich gifts; set him at the head of his learned men; made him governor over the whole province of Babylon; and, at his request, put his three friends into places of the highest trust under him. But all this happened (a) before the siege of Jerusalem.

Nebuchadnezzar being now returned home, out of the spoils which he had brought from Syria and Palestine, ordered a golden statue * to be made, thirty yards in height,

Persian, and its character is, that it “should bear rule over all the earth,” Dan. ii. 39.; which was verified in its great founder; for upon his return from India to Babylon, the ambassadors of almost all the known parts of the world resorted thither to pay their homage and acknowledgment of his dominion. That of iron is the Roman empire, which is distinguished by its “breaking in pieces, and subduing all things,” ver. 40. For whilst it was in its full strength and vigour, under its consuls and first emperors, it brought under its dominion all the kingdoms and states that were then subsisting in Europe, Africa, and a great part of Asia; but from that time it became a mixture of iron and clay. Its emperors proved most of them vicious and corrupt, either by their tyranny making themselves hateful to their subjects, or, by their follies and vices, contemptible. Lastly, that of the stone out of the mountain is the fifth monarchy, or the kingdom of the Messias; which, against all the power and policy of the Roman empire, prevailed, not by an external force, but by the powerful preaching of the gospel, to the suppression and defeat of wickedness and impiety, idolatry, and superstition, and “it shall stand for ever, and never be destroyed,” Dan. ii. 44. which can be said of no other kingdom but that of Jesus Christ, which for these seventeen (now eighteen) hundred years and upwards, has withstood the violence of persecutions, and all other contrivances formed against it, and has the sure promises of its Almighty founder on its side, that “the gates of hell shall not prevail against it,” Matth. xvi. 18. *Calmet's Commentary.*

† Nebuchadnezzar seems, in a sudden transport, to have looked upon Daniel as having something more than human in him; just as the barbarians thought of St Paul, Acts xxviii. 6. and therefore it is said, that “he fell on his face and worshipped him;” because the doing of reverence, by way of prostration, is not only an act of worship paid to God, but frequently given to kings and great men in the Old Testament, according to the custom of eastern countries, 2 Sam. ix. 6. and sometimes even to prophets, on account

of the sanctity of their office, 1 Kings xviii. 7. nor was it usually refused by them, except such circumstances were added to it as made it look like Divine worship, and then it was always rejected, as in the case of St Peter, Acts x. 26. *Lowth's Commentary* on Dan. ii. 43.

(a) Viz. in the seventh year of Jehoiakim, according to Pridcaux. [This however seems to be a mistake. The most accurate chronologers suppose it to have happened not only after the destruction of Jerusalem, but even after Nebuchadnezzar's devastation of Egypt; and the arguments by which they support their opinion appear to be conclusive. 1. Daniel was old enough to be included, with his three friends, among the *Magi* condemned to death, for not telling to the king his dream, and not only so, but to be appointed *Archimagus* on his declaring and interpreting that dream. 2. He styles *Nebuchadnezzar* king of kings, invested with universal dominion over all the earth; but this could not be said even in the hyperbolic style of the east, till after the king's return from the conquest of Egypt. Jackson and Hales therefore place the discovery and interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's first dream 569 years before Christ, or seventeen years after the destruction of Jerusalem, *Hales's Analysis*, vol. ii. p. 497.]

* Grotius is of opinion, that the image which Nebuchadnezzar set up was the figure of his father Nabopolassar, whom, by this means, he intended to deify; but others think that it was his own statue which he erected, to gain the adorations of his people in this form. We cannot, however, in what we find Nebuchadnezzar saying to Daniel's friends, perceive that he anywhere upbraids them with contempt offered either to his person or his statue, but only that they “would not serve his gods, nor worship the image which he had set up,” Dan. iii. 14. and therefore others have imagined, that this was neither his own nor his father's statue, but that of Jupiter, which was afterwards found in the temple of Belus, when Xerxes plundered it of its immense riches, among which were several images of massy gold, but one more especially

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and of proportionable bigness; and having set it up in the plains of Dura near Babylon, he summoned all his subjects, of whatever order and degree, to be present at the dedication of it, and the moment they heard the music strike up (which was to be the signal), to fall prostrate on their faces and adore it, upon pain of being thrown into a burning † furnace.

Among the captive Jews, the three friends of Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, were accused to the king as having violated his command; and, when they were brought before him, persisted in their refusal to pay adoration to the image, with so much constancy, that the king being incensed thereat, ordered those about him to have the furnace made seven times hotter than it was before; to bind these bold contemners of his will, and cast them immediately into it.

The furnace indeed was so intensely hot, that the persons who were ordered to throw them in, were scorched to death: but they themselves came to no manner of harm: for an angel †² from heaven came, and, suspending the agency of the fire, walked in the midst of the furnace with them, blessing †³ and praising God; so that when the king (who stayed to see the execution) perceived it, he started up on a sudden, and, coming nearer to the mouth of the furnace, called upon them to come forth; which they instant-

forty feet high, which might be the same that Nebuchadnezzar consecrated in the plains of Dura. For though that is said to have been sixty cubits, i. e. ninety feet high, yet we may suppose, that it stood upon a pedestal of fifty feet high, and so the image and the pedestal together might make ninety (vid. vol. i. page 238, 239, in the note), otherwise there would be no proportion between its height and its breadth, according to the description we have of it in Dan. iii. 1. *Prideaux's* Connection, an. 573. [That the image which Xerxes found in the temple of Belus was forty feet high, is indeed said by *Diodorus Siculus* (lib. 2.); but according to *Herodotus* (lib. i. c. 183.) it was only twelve cubits or *eighteen feet high*, and this is surely the more probable account of the two. It may, however, have been the image set up by Nebuchadnezzar; for in the height of that image, as stated in the book of Daniel, the pedestal or pillar, on which it was placed in the plain of Dura, is probably included.]

† This kind of punishment was pretty common in these parts of the world, so that some will have it, that Abraham, before he departed from Chaldea, was made to undergo it, but escaped by a miraculous preservation; founding their opinion on Gen. xi. 31. Of this furnace in particular it is related, that the king's servants having received the command to heat it seven times hotter, "ceased not to make the oven hot with rosin, pitch, tow, and small wood; so that the flame streamed forth above the furnace forty and nine cubits, and passed through and burnt the Chaldeans, it found about the furnace." *The Song of the three holy Children*, ver. 23, &c,

†² Nebuchadnezzar's expression upon this occasion is, "Lo! I see four men walking loose in the midst of the fire, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God," Dan. iii. 25. whereupon some have thought that this prince, having little or no knowledge of the true religion, imagined that he saw some demi-god, (an Apollo, an Hercules, a Mercury for instance) the son of a superior god, walking with the three Hebrew youths in the fiery furnace. The notion, it

must be owned, agrees very well with the ancient theology of the Grecians, to which that of the Chaldeans had no small resemblance: but as angels are sometimes in Scripture called the sons of God, Job. i. 6. and xxxviii. 7. and most nations had not only a belief of their existence, but high conceptions likewise of their power; the king explains himself what he means by the son of God, when, in joy for their deliverance, he cries out, "blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who hath sent his angel and delivered his servants that trusted in him!" Daniel iii. 28. For (as it is in the song of the three holy children) "the angel of the Lord came down into the oven, together with Azariah and his fellows, and smote the flame of the oven, and made the midst of the furnace as it had been a moist and whistling wind, so that the fire touched them not at all, neither hurt nor troubled them."

†³ According to the vulgar Latin edition, in the third chapter of Daniel, between the twenty third and twenty fourth verses, is added the song of the three children; but being no where extant either in the Hebrew, or Chaldee language, and never received in the canon of Holy Writ by the Jewish church, or by the ancient Christians, our church has thought proper to place it among the Apocryphal writings where it stands next to the book of Baruch, though the church of Rome, by a decree of the council of Trent, (Sess. iv.) has not only given it, but the history of Susanna likewise, and of Bel and the Dragon, (which most of the ancients looked upon as mere fables) a place among the canonical Scriptures. The song itself consists of two parts; a prayer and a thanksgiving. The prayer is a devout confession of the sins of the people, and acknowledgment of God's righteousness in bringing their captivity and other calamities upon them; and the thanksgiving is a solemn excitation of all creatures whatever, but more especially of the three Hebrew children who were thus "saved from the hand of death, to bless the Lord, praise him, and exalt him above all for ever."

ly did, in the presence of him and all his attendants, without * so much as an hair of their heads being singed, or the least smell of fire about them. Convinced by the greatness of this miracle, the king himself glorified the God of Israel; published an edict in favour of the Jewish religion; and gave these three glorious confessors still higher promotion in the province of Babylon.

From Jer. xl.
7. to xlv. all
Daniel, and
from Ezra i.
to v.

Not long after this, the judgments which the prophet Jeremiah (a) had denounced against his countrymen the Jews, when they rejected the counsel of God, and fled into Egypt for protection, (as they vainly thought) began to operate *²: for when Nebuchadnezzar understood *³, that the subjects of Pharaoh Hophra had revolted from him, and declared Amasis (an officer of his court) their king, he took the advantage of the intestine troubles ensuant thereupon; and having in a short time over-run the country from Migdol to Syene †, i. e. from one end of Egypt to the other, he plundered and laid it waste; and of the Jews who, after the murder of Gedaliah, had fled thither, some he slew, and others he carried away captive to Babylon; so that scarce any escaped but such as fled out of Egypt, and afterwards settled themselves in their own land at the end of the captivity.

Having thus reduced the king of Egypt, and constituted Amasis his viceroy, he returned to Babylon, where he had another dream which gave him fresh disquiet. This dream he very well remembered; and therefore he sent for his own magicians first, in hopes that they could have interpreted it; but when he met with no satisfaction from them, he was forced to have recourse to Daniel again; and thus, upon his entrance, he accosted him:

“ I saw †² a tree of a prodigious bigness, which seemed to reach from earth to heaven. It was fair and full of fruit; yielded shelter to the beasts and fowls, and sustenance to all flesh. I saw †³ likewise an angel coming down from heaven, who cried

* “ As if the flame itself (according to the expression of Jesephus) had been conscious of the injustice of their sentence, and suspended the very nature of its consuming quality in favour of the innocent. *Jewish Antiquities*, lib. x. c. 11.

(a) Jer. xlv. 27, 28.

*² [It was probably before the erection of the golden image, and the miraculous deliverance of the three Jews, that Egypt revolted and was subdued]. See p. 485. of this vol. note (a).

*³ The occasion of this revolt is to this effect related by Herodotus,—That Pharaoh Hophra (whom he calls Apries) having lost a great army in Lybia (and as some imagined) on purpose, that, being rid of them, he might with more ease and security govern the rest, fell under the resentment of his subjects to such a degree, that several of them joined together in a body, and revolted from him; that, to appease and reduce them to their duty, he sent Amasis, one of the officers of his court, to them; but instead of his persuading them, they prevailed with him to be their king; that hereupon Hophra sent Paterbamis, a person of the first rank, to arrest Amasis and bring him with him; but when he returned without being able to execute his commission, he commanded his ears and his nose to be immediately cut off; which indignity to a man of his worth and character so exasperated the rest of his subjects, that they almost all forsook him, so that he was forced to hire an army of foreigners, wherewith he attempted to give Amasis battle not far from Memphis; but had the misfortune

to be vanquished, taken prisoner, and carried to the city Sais, where he was strangled in his own palace. *Herodotus*, lib. 1. and *Diodorus Siculus*, lib. 1. part ii.

† This is a city in the southern frontiers of Egypt, between Thebes and the great cataracts of the Nile, of which the ancients speak frequently as the farthest part in Egypt of any note towards Ethiopia. *Calmet's Dictionary* under the word.

†² It is very observable, that, in the writings of the prophets, princes are frequently compared to trees, (*Ezek.* xvii. 5, 6. and xxxi. 3. *Jer.* xxii. 15. *Psal.* xxxvi. 35.) and it is the notion of Grotius, that a tree, seen in a dream, according to the principles of the Indians, Persians, and Egyptians, denotes some great and excellent personage; but nothing is more precarious than these principles, or more uncertain than these observations, because in the dreams which come from God, he may represent an eminent person under a thousand different types, as well as that of a stately tree. *Calmet's Commentary* on Dan. iv. 7.

†³ The words in our translation are, I saw a watcher, which, as it came down from heaven, could be no other than an angel. The Chaldee word is Nir, from whence St Jerome imagines that the Pagans derived their Iris the messenger of the gods; and by some expressions in Dan. iv. 17. it looks as if the Chaldeans had a notion (for the king, we may suppose, speaks according to the common sentiments of the people) that these watchers, or holy ones in heaven, did constitute an assembly of judges, or were an order of blessed spirits, who took under their cognizance and de-

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with a loud voice, Hew down the tree, cut off the branches, shake off the leaves, scatter the fruit, and let all creatures depart from it; but let the stump remain in the earth, and bind it with a band of iron and brass, in the tender grass of the field, and let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and let his portion be with the beasts in the grass of the earth: let his heart be changed from that of a man, and a beast's heart be given him†, and let seven times pass over him."

As soon as Daniel heard the dream, he was so affected with the dreadful judgments which it portended to the king, that he stood silent for the space of an hour; but being encouraged by the king to expound the thing to him, be it what it would, he addressed himself to him in these words:—"The tree, O king, which thou sawest in thy dream, is thyself; for thy greatness reacheth unto the heavens, and thy dominions to the end of the earth: But the angel which came from heaven with orders to cut down the tree, denotes the decree of the Most High, which is determined against thee, viz. that thou shalt be driven from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field; that thou shalt eat grass with the oxen, and be wet with the dew of heaven; that seven years shall pass over thee, before thou comest to consider that God ruleth over the kingdoms of men; and that, after such a term, thou shalt be restored to thy kingdom again, which is the thing intimated by the stump of the tree that was ordered to be left. And now, that thou hast heard the interpretation of this dream, permit me, O king, to advise thee to atone for thy sins by an holy life, and by acts of mercy to the poor, and to recommend thyself to the mercy of God, that he may prolong thy posterity." This was the advice of a faithful minister; but Nebuchadnezzar, it is to be feared, had †² not the heart to pursue it.

His cessation from war (in which he had been long engaged) had by this time given him an opportunity of finishing his stately buildings at Babylon; and upon the survey of these, as well as other monuments of his greatness, he became so intoxicated with pride and arrogance, that God, in punishment of his haughty mind, deprived him of his senses, and for exalting himself above the state of men reduced him to the condition of a beast.

cision the fate of men; for by the decree of these watchers it was that the tree (in the vision) was ordered to be cut down. *Calmet's Commentary.*

[On the question, Who were meant by the *watchers* and the *holy ones*? the reader may consult Bishop Horsley's Sermons, vol. ii. Sermon 29.]

† The ambiguity of this expression (which the prophet, in his exposition of the dream, still adheres to) has occasioned a great variety of opinions concerning it. Some maintain, that, as the Persians distinguished their years into two seasons, winter and summer, the seven years of Nebuchadnezzar must be reckoned in this manner, which will therefore reduce them to the space of three years and an half. Dorotheus (in his synopsis of the lives of the prophets and apostles) tells us, that God did indeed condemn Nebuchadnezzar to seven years habitation with brutes, but that, at the prayers and intercessions of Daniel, the seven years were reduced to seven months. The word *time*, according to others, denotes no more than the space of a month; so that the king's disorder, of course, lasted no longer than seven months; whereof (according to their computation) for the first forty days he continued in his frenzy as a madman; in the forty days following, he bewailed his offences; and, in the last forty days, he recovered by degrees from his infirmity: But all these are idle conjectures. A

year was a common measure of time among the Chaldeans, especially in the chronicles of their kings; and therefore, in this particular, we need no other interpreter for Daniel than Daniel himself, who in sundry places of this prophecy, particularly in chap. xii. 7. has set a time, and times, and the dividing, or half of a time, for the space of three years and an half. *Calmet's Dictionary*, under the word *Nebuchadnezzar*.

†² God delayed the execution of his threats against this prince, and gave him a whole year's reprieve, chap. iv. 29. to see if he would repent, and turn unto him; but perceiving that he still persisted in his crimes, as soon as the measure of his iniquity was full, he smote and reduced him to the condition of a beast. This is Theodoret's notion of the matter; but St Jerom rather thinks, that this king, being terrified with the threats, and touched with the exhortations of the prophet, began to set about his reformation, and, by acts of charity and mercy, to reconcile himself to God, for which he obtained a delay of his punishment for a year's space; but that, instead of persevering in these good purposes, he suffered himself to fall into pride, upon the contemplation of the mighty works he had done, and so, by his vanity, lost what he had gained by his charity. *Bonum Misericordiae Perdidit malo Superbæ.* *Calmet's Commentary.*

For seven years he lived abroad in the fields, eating grass like an ox, and taking up his lodging on the ground in the open air. But at the expiration of this time, when he became sensible of God's superior power and dominion, his senses returned to him again. His kingdom was restored, and he reinstated in his former majesty; whereupon he made this solemn and grateful acknowledgment: (a) "And now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise, and extol, and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment; and those that walk in pride, he is able to abase when he pleases."

From Jer. xl. 7. to xlv. all Daniel, and from Ezra i. to v.

Upon the death of Nebuchadnezzar * (for he lived not long after his restoration) his son Evil-merodach succeeded to the throne of Babylon, and to make some amends for his father's hard usage of Jehoiachin, the captive king of Judah, he released him (as we said before) from an imprisonment that had lasted near 37 years, and promoted him to great honour in his palace. His reign however was but short; for his lusts and wickednesses had, in the space of two years, made him so intolerable, that even his own relations conspired against him, and put him to death; whereupon Neriglissar, his sister's husband, (who was at the head of the conspiracy) reigned in his stead, and as Jehoiachin † did not long survive him, Salathiel his son succeeded as nominal prince †² of the Jews. Upon his accession to the throne, Neriglissar made great preparations for war against the Medes; which obliged Cyaxares, their king, to call in the assistance of his nephew Cyrus †³ out of Persia, who, coming with a body of thirty thousand

(a) Dan. iv. 37.

* This prince died in the year of the world 3442, and before Christ 562, [according to Hales A. M. 4850, and B. C. 561], after he had reigned from the death of his father, according to the Babylonish account, three and forty years. He was certainly one of the greatest princes that had appeared in the East for many ages before him, and, according to Megasthenes, (as he is cited by Josephus, Antiq. lib. x. c. 11.) both for his enterprises and performances, far excelled even Hercules himself. The same historian (as he is quoted by Eusebius, Præp. lib. ix. c. 41.) informs us, that a little before his death he foretold his subjects of the coming of the Persians, and their subduing the kingdom of Babylon; but this he might gather from the prophet Daniel, and especially from the interpretation of his dreams. *Prideaux's Connection*, anno 562.

† It is not unlikely that Jehoiachin, being a favourite, fell with him; for that best agrees with Jeremiah's prophecies concerning him, wherein it is denounced, chap. xxii. 30. that he "should not prosper in his days;" which could not be so well verified of him had he died in the full possession of all that prosperity to which Evil-merodach had advanced him. *Prideaux's Connection*, anno 559.

†² Long after the loss of all authority the Jews kept up the title of a king among them, and had a person descended of the house of David, who, by the name of the head of the captivity, was acknowledged and honoured as a prince, and, as far as it was consistent with the government they lived under, was invested with some sort of jurisdiction over them. Nay, to this very day, the same pageantry is said to be kept up among the Jews, and chiefly with this view, that they may be furnished from hence with an answer against the Christians, urging the prophecy of

Jacob against them, viz. that the sceptre is departed from Judah; for thereupon their usual reply is, That the sceptre is still preserved among them in the head of the captivity; though some of them have modesty enough to give up this. *Prideaux's Connection*, anno 559.

†³ It is on all hands agreed, that Astyages, king of the Medes, had a son whom profane history calls Cyaxares; and a daughter, whose name was Mandana, married to Cambyses, a Persian, by whom she had Cyrus; but whether this Cambyses was king of the country, or only a private person, it is not so well agreed. The two chief historians who write of this matter are Herodotus and Xenophon; but their relations in this regard are different; forasmuch as the latter makes his father king of Persia, the former a meaner man. The account of Herodotus indeed contains narratives that are much more strange and surprising, and consequently more diverting and acceptable to the reader; and for this reason more have chosen to follow him than Xenophon: But though Xenophon (as being a great commander as well as a great politician) had certainly grafted many maxims of war and policy into his history, yet, where nothing of this appears, he must be allowed to be an historian of much more credit in matters of fact than Herodotus. Herodotus having travelled through Egypt, Syria, and several other countries, in order to the writing of his history, did (as travellers used to do) put down all matters upon trust, and in many no doubt was imposed on; but Xenophon was a man of another character. He wrote all things with great judgment and due consideration; and having lived in the court of Cyrus the younger, a descendant of the Cyrus whom we now speak of, had opportunities of being better informed of what he wrote concerning this great prince than Herodotus had; and, confining himself to

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Persians, was by his uncle made general of the Medes likewise, and thereupon, with his joint forces, gave Neriglissar battle, slew him, and put his army to the rout.

The death of this prince proved a great loss to the Babylonians, especially considering that his son Laborosoarchod (who succeeded him) was in every thing the very reverse of his father, a man given to all manner of wickedness *, cruelty, and injustice, for which he became so odious to his own subjects, that they conspired against him and slew him, after he had reigned only nine months.

Belshazzar † (in all probability the grandson of the great Nebuchadnezzar) succeeded him; in the first year of whose reign (a) Daniel had his dream of the four beasts, representing the four empires of the Chaldeans, Persians, Greeks, (b) and Romans; and in the third the famous vision of the ram and the he-goat, by the latter of which was signified Alexander the Great, and by the former Darius Codomannus, the last of the Persian kings who were the successors of Cyrus. Cyrus indeed, who was to lay the foundation of the Persian monarchy, had several conflicts with Belshazzar's armies, but

this argument only, no doubt he examined all matters relating to it more thoroughly, and gave a more accurate and just account of them than could be expected from the other who wrote of all things at large, as they came in his way. *Prideaux's Connection*, anno 563.

* Two acts of his tyrannical violence towards two of his principal nobility, Gobrias and Gadates, are particularly mentioned by Xenophon, viz. That the only son of the former he slew at an hunting, to which he had invited him, for no other reason but his throwing a dart with success at a wild beast, when he himself had missed it: And that the other he caused to be castrated, merely because one of his concubines had commended him for an handsome man. *Cyropædia*, lib. 5.

† Great is the difference among historians and others who this Belshazzar (who is generally believed to be the same with the Nabonnedus in Berosus, and the Labynetus in Herodotus) was. Some will have him to be of the royal blood of Nebuchadnezzar, and others no way related to him. Some maintain that he was a Babylonian, and others affirm that he was a Mede; and of those who allow him to be of the royal family of Nebuchadnezzar, some will have it that he was his son, and others that he was his grandson; and therefore, to clear this matter, we must observe, 1st, That Belshazzar (be he who he will) was certainly of the seed of Nebuchadnezzar, because he is expressly called his son in several places of the 5th chapter of Daniel, and in 2 Chron. xxxvi. 20. it is said, that Nebuchadnezzar and his children, or offspring, reigned in Babylon until the kingdom of Persia commenced. 2dly, That according to the prophecy of Jeremiah (Chap. xxvii. 7.) the nations of the East were to serve Nebuchadnezzar and his son, and his son's son, and therefore he must have had a son, and a son's son, successors to him in the throne of Babylon. 3dly, That as Evil-merodach was Nebuchadnezzar's son, of all the king's that reigned after him at Babylon, none but Belshazzar could be his son's son: For Neriglissar was only his daughter's husband, and Laborosoarchod was Neriglissar's son; so that neither of them was either son or grandson to Nebuchadnezzar. 4thly, That according to Hero-

dotus, lib. i. the last king of Babylon (who without doubt was Belshazzar, because immediately after his death the kingdom was given to the Medes and Persians, Dan. v. 28. 30, 31.) was son to the great queen Nitocris; but now Nitocris, to have a child that was grandson to Nebuchadnezzar, could be wife to no other than Evil-merodach; and therefore, putting all this together, it appears that Belshazzar, the last king of Babylon, was the son of Evil-merodach by Nitocris his queen, and consequently son's son to Nebuchadnezzar; nor must it seem strange that we find him, in Dan. v. called Nebuchadnezzar's son, and Nebuchadnezzar his father, because it is the usual style of Scripture to call any ancestor upward father, and any descendant downward son. *Prideaux's Connection*, anno 555.

[It is not often safe to differ on a point of ancient history with Dr Prideaux; but the series of Nebuchadnezzar's successors on the throne of Babylon, as given by Dr Hales, seems more consistent than this, both with itself and with sacred Scripture. That *Evil-merodach*—the *Iberodam* in *Ptolemy's canon*, was the son and immediate successor of Nebuchadnezzar, seems to be universally admitted. According to Hales, however, he was not cut off in a conspiracy of his own subjects, but slain in battle by *Cyrus* when commanding the armies of his uncle and father-in-law *Cyaxares*, whose territories *Evil-merodach* had prepared wantonly to attack. He was succeeded by his son *Neriglissar*, the *Belshazzar* of Daniel, and grandson of Nebuchadnezzar the Great; and it was *Belshazzar* or *Neriglissar* who so cruelly oppressed his own subjects, and exercised such acts of tyrannic violence on *Gobrias* and *Gadates*, as provoked them to excite a conspiracy against him, in which he was slain (according to *Ptolemy's canon*) seventeen years before the final overthrow of the kingdom of Babylon. *Laborosoarchod*, who is, by our author, called the predecessor of *Belshazzar*, we learn from *Berosus* to have been his son, and, though a mere boy (παῖς), to have succeeded him in the kingdom; but he was slain, in a conspiracy, nine months afterwards, and is therefore omitted in *Ptolemy's canon*.] *Hales's Analysis*, &c vol. ii. p. 503, &c. and vol. iii. p. 81, &c.

(a) Chap. vii.

(b) Chap. viii.

at length, having overthrown him in a pitched battle, he shut him up in the city of Babylon, and there besieged him.

From Jer. xl. 7. to xlv. all Daniel, and from Ezra i. to v.

During the siege Belshazzar, having made a great feast for all his courtiers, ordered that the vessels of gold and silver, which his grandfather Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple of Jerusalem, should be brought into the banqueting-house, that he and his princes, together with his wives and concubines, might drink out of them; which accordingly was done, and, to add to their profaneness, in the midst of their cups, they sang songs in the praise of their several idols. But it was not long before God † put a damp to the king's mirth, by causing an hand to appear upon the wall, which, in three words, wrote the sentence of his condemnation. The king saw the hand that wrote; and being exceedingly affrighted and troubled at it, he commanded all his wise-men, magicians, and astrologers, to be immediately called, that they might read the writing, and explain its meaning; but when none †² of them could do either, notwithstanding the great honours †³ and presents which he offered them, at the instances of the || queen-mother Daniel was sent for.

As soon as he came into the king's presence, he ||² received him very courteously, and made him the same offer of honours and presents that he had done to his own magicians,

† Next to murder, no sin is so remarkably punished in this world as that of sacrilege. This appears from innumerable instances taken from all histories, both sacred and profane. But in the heathen story, remarkable examples of this kind are, the miserable end of the Phœceans who robbed the temple of Delphos, and were the occasion of that war, which was called from thence the holy war: The destruction of the Gauls in their attempt upon the same temple, and of Crassus, who plundered the temple of Jerusalem, and that of the Syrian goddess; as these two last stories are related by Prideaux, part ii. *Lowth's Commentary on Dan. v. 5.*

†² The writing very probably might be in a character unknown to the Chaldeans, as the old Hebrew, Phœnician, and Samaritan were; or if they were acquainted with the character, yet such is the genius of most of the oriental languages, where so little use is made of vowels, and where the pronunciation and sequel of the discourse generally determine the signification of the letters, that a man may be a perfect master of a language, and yet not able to read and comprehend a word when it stands alone, and without any context, as it is in the case of *Mene. Tekel. Upharsin*. A man, for instance, that understands the Hebrew tongue never so well, were he to meet *db* standing alone, would have much ado to read them, because, according to the manner that we pronounce them, the letters will admit of many different significations; and it is much the same in the Chaldee language, wherein the words we are now speaking of were wrote. *Calmet's Commentary on Dan. v. 7.*

†³ The king's words are these,—“Whosoever shall read this writing, and shew me the interpretation thereof, shall be clothed with scarlet, and have a chain of gold about his neck, and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom,” Dan. v. 7. From whence it appears, that the kings of Babylon wore the same ornaments, and, in rewarding their favourites, gave the same marks of honours that the kings of Persia and their successors did; for purple, we find, in se-

veral Greek authors, was the ordinary habit of the kings of Persia, and of the princes of their court, that were in the highest posts of honour. The chain, or collar of gold, was one of the greatest marks of distinction that the Persian kings could bestow upon their subjects; and “to be the third ruler of the kingdom” was the same sublime office that Darius the Mede put Daniel in, chap. vi. 1, 2. when he constituted him one of the presidents over the hundred and twenty princes that he had made governors over provinces. *Xenophon's Cyropædia*, lib. viii. *Diodorus*, lib. xviii. *Joseph. Antiq.* lib. xi. c. 6. *Brisson, de Regno Persar.* lib. i.

|| In the 2d verse of the vth chapter of Daniel, we read, “that the king, his princes, his wives, and his concubines” were all at the feast which he made for them; and yet, in the 10th verse, it follows, that the queen, upon hearing the news of the hand-writing, came into the banquet-house: but then it must be observed, that this queen was not one of his wives, but Nitocris, his mother, and she seems there to be called the queen by way of eminency, because she had the regency of the kingdom under her son, for which her great wisdom duly qualified her. For this reason Herodotus speaks of her as if she had been sovereign of the kingdom, (in the same manner as Semiramis is said to have been) and attributes to her all those works about Babylon, which other authors ascribe to her son. *Prideaux's Connection*, Anno 547.

||² And yet it is observable, that, when he came into his presence, he asked him, “Art thou that Daniel?” Which seems to imply, that, though he was one of the chief ministers of state, Dan. v. 13. the king did not know him: but this only shews, that Belshazzar was a man who minded nothing but his pleasures, and left all things else to the management of others,—a conduct too often followed by such princes as think kingdoms made for nothing else but to serve their pleasures and gratify their lusts! *Prideaux's Connection*, Anno 547.

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if he would but explain the writing. Daniel modestly refused the offers he made him ; but having undertook to perform what he required of him, he first reprov'd him with some freedom for his ingratitude to God, who had advanced him to the rank of a sovereign, and for the profanation of the vessels which were consecrated to his service ; and then proceeded to the interpretation of the words, which were these,—MENE. TEKEL. UPHARSIN. “ *Mene*, says he, which signifies *number*, intimates, that the days both of your life and of your reign are numbered, or that you have but a short time to live. *Tekel*, which signifies *weight*, intimates, that you have been weighed in the balance of God’s justice, and found too light ; and *Upharsin* †, which signifies a *fragment*, intimates, that your kingdom shall be divided and given to the Medes and Persians ;” which accordingly came to pass : for that very night, in the midst of their feasting and revelling, the city * was taken by surprise †², Belshazzar slain, and the kingdom translated to Cyaxeres, whom the Scripture calls Darius the Mede.

[Darius the Mede or Cyaxares II. being of an easy, indolent disposition, and fond of his amusements, naturally preferred, for the place of his residence, the metropolis of his ancient kingdom, to the capital of his newly acquired empire. The first act of his sovereignty therefore over Babylon, was the appointment of *Nabonadius*, a *Babylonian* nobleman, not allied to the royal family, to be king or rather viceroy under himself.

† Daniel, in repeating the words, instead of *Upharsin*, puts in *Peres* ; but they both signify the same thing.

* Cyrus had been lying before the town to little or no purpose for the space of two years, when, understanding that a great annual feast was approaching, wherein the Babylonians, in honour of their idol Sheshach, were wont to spend the whole night in revelling and drunkenness, he thought this no improper time to attempt to surprise them. To this purpose, having posted one part of his men at the place where the river ran into the city, and another where it came out, with orders to enter, by way of the channel, as soon as they found the river fordable : About the close of the evening he fell to work, broke down the dams, and turned aside the stream ; so that, by the middle of the night, the river was so drained that the parties, according to their orders, entered the channel, and finding the gates leading down to the river open, by them they ascended into the city, and made directly to the palace, where they slew the king and all those that were about him. By this stratagem Cyrus became master of Babylon, but he took no care to repair the breach in the banks of the river ; so that all the country on that side was overflown, and the current which went to Babylon grew afterwards so shallow as to become unfit for the smallest navigation. So fully verified were all these prophecies concerning Babylon. “ Behold I will stir up the Medes against her,” Isa. xiii. 17. “ I will dry up her sea, and make her springs dry,” Jer. li. 36. “ Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees excellency, shall be like Sodom and Gomorrah,” Isa. xiii. 9. ; “ for I will make it a possession for the bittern, and pools of water,” Isa. xiv. 23. “ saith the King, whose name is the Lord of Hosts.” *Prideaux’s Connection*, Anno 547. [According to Dr Hales, the taking of Babylon by Cyrus was long after this, on the revolt of Nabonadius from the dominion of the Medes ; and it is certainly not said in the book of Daniel, that on the night of Bel-

shazzar’s murder the city was taken by Cyrus, or by any man. “ The great feast, on the night of which Belshazzar was slain, appears to have been at a season of profound peace and tranquillity, when a thousand of his lords could freely come from all parts of his empire without molestation or interruption from a besieging enemy, and when the king would be most apt to forget God, after he had eaten and was full.” In the book of Daniel it is not said how or by whom Belshazzar was slain ; but it may be collected, says Dr Hales, from Xenophon, that he was slain by conspirators, at the head of whom were Gobrias and Gadates. This is certainly not said by Xenophon, who seems to have confounded the time at which Belshazzar was slain, when the gods punished the impious king, with the taking of Babylon when it had revolted from the Midian yoke ; for it is much more probable that Xenophon confounded dates and events, than that there should be any mistake in the canon of Ptolemy, or in the Chaldean records as quoted by Berosus. The family of Nebuchadnezzar being now extinct, our author thinks that *Cyaxares* or *Darius the Mede*, who was the brother of Nebuchadnezzar’s queen, took possession of the throne by the voluntary offer of the Babylonians.] *Analysis*, &c. vol. ii. p. 507.

†² Of the manner wherein this was done, we find Xenophon (*Cyropædia*, lib. vii.) thus relating the story, viz. “ That two deserters, Gadates and Gobryas, having assisted some of the Persian army to kill the guards and seize upon the palace, they entered into the room where the king was, whom they found standing up in a posture of defence, but that they soon dispatched him, and those that were with him, and thereby fulfilled the prophecy of Jeremiah, ‘ I will make drunk her princes, and her wise men, her captains, and her rulers, and her mighty men ; and they shall sleep a perpetual sleep, and not awake, saith the King, whose name is the Lord of Hosts.’” Chap. li. 57. *Lowth’s Commentary* on Dan. v. 30.

This may be collected from *Berosus*; and it appears to have been the established policy of the *Medes* and *Persians* to place conquered nations under the immediate government of native princes, in order to conciliate the good-will of their new subjects. Daniel, whose interpretation of the Divine inscription on the wall had contributed materially to Darius's peaceable accession to the throne of Babylon, was naturally in the highest favour with him, as being] a person of extraordinary parts and learning, and long versed in affairs of state; and therefore, having divided the whole empire into an hundred and twenty provinces, over which he set governors, and over these three presidents as the king's chief ministers, he made Daniel the first of these †; but it happened to him, as it usually does to all favourites, to be maligned and envied by others.

From Jer. xl.
7. to xlv. all
Daniel, and
from Ezra i.
to v.

His administration of public affairs, however, was so just, that in that capacity he gave them no room for any accusation against him, and therefore they laid their plot another way. He, they knew, was a strict observer of the religion of his country, and a constant resorter to God in prayer; and therefore they applied themselves to Darius, in the name of his whole council and officers of state, that he would be pleased so far to indulge his people, as to pass a decree (only for thirty days), that whoever †² should ask any petition either of god or man, except of the king only, for that space of time, should be thrown to the lions; which the king, taking it for a great testimony of their affection and loyalty to him at his first accession to the throne, without any manner of hesitation passed into an act, and issued out his proclamation to that purpose.

Daniel was not ignorant that this wicked contrivance was designed to ensnare him; but, nevertheless, he continued his usual course of paying his adorations to God three times every day, and that, not in any clandestine manner, but with his chamber window open towards Jerusalem †³. His enemies, who had laid this snare for him, were not forgetful to watch him diligently; and therefore, having taken him in the act of prayer, they immediately went to the king, accused Daniel of a contempt of his decree, and desired that the sentence might instantly be executed upon him.

The king too late perceived, that his easy compliance with a fallacious offer had betrayed him into a mistake that was likely to prove fatal to his servant Daniel; and there-

† For though the whole power of the army, and the chief conduct of other affairs, were in the hands of Cyrus (and therefore we find him, in Ptolemy's canon, set down as immediate successor to Belshazzar, who is there called Nabonadius), yet as long as his uncle lived, Cyrus allowed him a joint title with him in the empire, and out of deference to him yielded him the first place of honour in it; though, in reality, he had no more than the name and shadow of sovereignty, except in Medea, which was his own proper dominion before any conquests were made. *Prideaux's Connection*, Anno 538. [This is certainly not correct. That *Nabonadius* was a very different man from Belshazzar has been already shown; and it seems evident from Ptolemy's canon, and from *Berosus* as quoted by Dr Hales, that Darius, whilst he lived, was the sole monarch of *Babylon* and *Medea*, though, being of an indolent disposition, as has been already observed, he left the burden of military affairs and the care of the government to Cyrus, who was at once his nephew, his son-in-law, and his destined heir. This may have led Xenophon, and after him *Prideaux*, to suppose *Cyrus* joint sovereign with his uncle of the Babylonian empire, especially as Darius appears to have lived only two years after he succeeded to that throne.]

†² It may seem a little strange, that Darius should

so readily accept of an honour which was due to God alone. But we see what a pitch of vanity and arrogance these eastern princes were arrived at, when we find Nebuchadnezzar, in Daniel, asking the three Hebrew youths, "Who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?" Dan. iii. 15.; when we find it said of another of that name, in the book of Judith, "Who is God but Nabuchodonosor? He will send his power and destroy them from the face of the earth," chap. vi. 2, 3.; and more especially, when we find the Persians making it a matter of state policy, to have the persons of their kings in the same veneration as they had their gods. *Quint. Curt.* lib. viii.

†³ It was a constant custom among the Jews, for those that were in the country, or in any distant land, to turn themselves towards Jerusalem; and for those that were at Jerusalem, to turn towards the temple when they prayed: And the probable reason of this might be the words of Solomon in his prayer to God at the consecration of the temple: "If thy people, when led away captive, pray unto thee toward their land which thou gavest unto their fathers, the city which thou hast chosen, and the house which I have built for thy name; then hear thou their prayers, and their supplication, in heaven thy dwelling-place, and maintain their cause," 1 Kings viii. 48, 49.

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fore he laboured what he could to reverse the decree : but the grandees, on the other hand, represented to him, that the royal decrees (according to the law of the Medes and Persians †) were unalterable, and consequently the penalty which Daniel had incurred irreversible ; so that, what through the importunity of these wicked men, and a false notion of honour in adhering to his word, the king delivered up Daniel to their mercy, but not without some glimmering hopes, that the God whom he served continually would by some means or other preserve him.

No sooner was Daniel delivered into their hands, but they hurried him away to the lions den ; and having thrown him in, they not only rolled a large stone to the mouth of it, but had it sealed likewise †² with their own as well as the king's signet, that thereby they might prevent all possibility of his making an escape. The king in the meantime went pensive home ; and having passed the night in much uneasiness and anxiety of mind, he rose early next morning and repaired to the den, where, to his great and surprising joy, he found Daniel alive ; and having caused him to be taken out, he ordered that his accusers, †³ their wives, and their children, should all be cast into it, where the lions fell upon them and instantly destroyed them : While the king, in grateful acknowledgment of a wonderful Providence in Daniel's preservation, made public proclamation, that in all the parts of his dominions, the God whom Daniel worshipped should be revered.

The term of seventy years, which the prophet Jeremiah †⁴ had prefixed for the continuance of Judah's captivity, being now drawing toward a conclusion, Daniel (a) thought it his duty to humble himself before God, and to make his ardent supplications to him, that he would remember his people, and grant a restoration to Jerusalem, and make his face again to shine upon his holy city, and his sanctuary, which was desolate : Whereupon he had, in a vision, assurance given him by the angel Gabriel, not only of the deliverance of Judah from their temporal captivity under the Babylonians, but also of a much greater redemption which God would give his church, by delivering them from their spiritual captivity under sin and Satan, to be accomplished at the end of seventy

† So Diodorus Siculus tells us (lib. iv.) of Darius the last king of Persia, That he would have pardoned Charidemus after he was condemned to death, but could not reverse the law that had passed against him. What made these laws thus unalterable, we are at a loss to know, unless we suppose, that when they passed, either the king confirmed them by an oath, and then they became immutable ; or, that they were sealed, not only by the king, but by all the princes then in council, as one would be apt to guess from Dan. vi. 8. and xii. 9. *Lowth's Commentary* on Dan. vi. and *Patrick's Commentary* on Esther i.

†² By this it seems as if the Persian government at this time was a kind of mixed monarchy, consisting of a king and nobles ; forasmuch as we find that the king could do nothing of importance without his counsellors, nor had he power to alter any thing that was determined in council. *Calmet's Commentary*.

†³ The Lex Talionis condemned all calumniators to the same sort of punishment which they intended to have brought upon others ; and in this case, among the Persians it was a frequent thing to include all the family in the penalty inflicted on the father ; but "Abominandæ Leges (says Ammianus Marcellinus) per quas, ob noxam unius, omnis propinquitus perit. *Calmet's Commentary*.

†⁴ The particular prophecies to which Daniel alludes, might probably be these,—“ Thus saith the

Lord of Hosts, because ye have not heard my words, behold, I will send and take all the families of the north, and Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, my servant, and will bring them against this land, and the inhabitants thereof.—And this whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years ; and it shall come to pass, when seventy years are accomplished, I will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation, saith the Lord, for their iniquity : But I will visit you, and perform my good word towards you, in causing you to return to this place. For I know my thoughts that I think towards you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end,” Jer. xxv. 8, &c. and xxix. 10, 11. But prophecies, he knew very well, were but conditional, and, for their accomplishment, dependant in a great measure upon the behaviour of those to whom they were made. One part of this prediction he had seen executed in the punishment of the king of Babylon, and the translation of his kingdom to the Medes and Persians ; but reason good he had to fear, lest the sins of his countrymen, the Jews, should retard the completion of the other part, viz. their return from captivity, beyond the compass of seventy years : And this was both the cause of his grief and the motive of his prayer. *Calmet's Commentary*.

(a) Chap. ix.

weeks after the going forth of the commandment to rebuild Jerusalem, i. e. at the expiration of four hundred and ninety years, as we shall have occasion to explain that remarkable passage (a) hereafter.

From Jer. xl, 7. to xiv. all Daniel, and from Ezra i. to v.

Upon the reduction of Babylon, (b) which put an end to the Chaldean empire, after it had continued from the reign of Nabonassar (who founded it) two hundred and nine years, Cyrus went into Persia to make a visit to his father and mother, who were yet living; and on his return through Medea, married the daughter and only child of his uncle Darius, and had, in dower with her, the reversion of the kingdom of Medea after her father's death: So that, in a short time, he succeeded not only to the Babylonish empire, but to the two additional kingdoms of Persia and Medea likewise, and from hence the whole extent of his dominions took the name of the Persian empire*.

(c) As soon as Cyrus was come into the full possession of the empire, he published a decree †, wherein he gave free liberty to the Jews to return to their own country, and to rebuild the house of the Lord at Jerusalem. †² Many of the sacred vessels, (to the

(a) Dan. ix. 24, &c.

(b) *Prideaux's Connection*, anno 540.

* [There seem to be in this paragraph many mistakes. It cannot be true that Cyrus did not marry the daughter of *Darius* or *Cyaxares* II. till after the conquest of Babylon; for *Xenophon*, who relates this, says likewise that the princess and he were about the same age; and it seems indisputable that at the conquest of Babylon Cyrus was 63 years of age. But he had two children by the daughter of *Darius*, who were both grown to man's estate at his death when he was 70 years of age; and therefore he must have married at a much earlier period than the conquest of Babylon. His father likewise, and probably his mother, must have been dead before that period, as will appear from the following account of the birth, successions to different kingdoms, and death of this illustrious prince, collected by Dr Hales with the utmost care and accuracy.

"The reign of *Cyrus* over *Persia* began, according to *Diodorus*, *Thallus*, *Castor*, *Polybius*, and *Phlegon* cited by *Euseb.* Prep. Evang. lib. 10. in the first year of the 55th olympiad, corresponding to the Julian years, B. C. 560, and 559. He reigned, in all, 30 years, according to *Ctesias*, *Justin*, *Clemens Alexandrinus*, and *Eusebius*; 29 according to *Herodotus*; and 31 years according to *Sulpitius*. The year of his death is ascertained to have been B. C. 529. by a lunar eclipse recorded by *Ptolemy* to have happened in the seventh year of his son and successor *Cambyses*, B. C. 523. This determines the birth of *Cyrus* to have been B. C. 599, two years after his grandfather, *Astyages*, succeeded to the crown of *Media* B. C. 601.

Cyrus succeeded to the crown of *Persia*, on the demise of his father, B. C. 559, as hath been already observed, and is determined by the thirty years of his whole reign. This corrects an error of *Xenophon*, who represents *Cambyses*,—father of *Cyrus*—as still alive after the capture of *Babylon*, B. C. 536; an error into which he was led, perhaps, by confounding this capture with the death of *Belshazzar*, that 'impious king,' as he calls him, who was slain seventeen years before, B. C. 553. when *Cyaxares*, or *Darius the Mede*, 'took' possession of the kingdom of *Babylon*. *Cyrus* peaceably succeeded his uncle two years after," as the author completely proves, in opposition

to *Herodotus*, and the general current of ancient and modern historians, by the united testimony of *Æschylus*, *Xenophon*, *Josephus*, and the *Persian* historians, supported by the authority of SCRIPTURE, and COMMON SENSE. "And when *Nabonadius*, who had been appointed viceroy of *Babylon* by *Darius the Mede*, at length rebelled and joined *Cræsus* the sovereign of *Lydia*, he was defeated, B. C. 538, and *Babylon* was taken by *Cyrus*, B. C. 536, which was, of course, the era of the actual commencement of his full sovereignty.] *Hales's Analysis*, &c. vol. ii. p. 283, and vol. iii. p. 94, 98, 99.

(c) *Ezra* i. 1, &c.

† It is a good deal more than probable, that this decree in favour of the Jews was in a great measure owing to *Daniel's* good offices. *Cyrus*, at his first coming to *Babylon*, after he had taken the city, found him there an old minister of state, famed for his great wisdom over all the East, and in many things for a knowledge superior to the rest of mankind; and accordingly we find, that he not only employed him as such, but, upon the settling of the government of the whole empire, made him first superintendent or prime minister of state over all the provinces of it. In this station of life, *Daniel* must have been a person of great authority at court, and highly in the esteem of his prince, and therefore, as we find him earnest in his prayer to God for the restoration of his people, Dan. ix. we cannot but think, that he would be equally warm in his intercessions for it with the king. To which purpose, it is not improbable, that he might shew him those passages in *Isaiah*, which speak of him by name (an hundred and fifty years before he was born), as a great prince and conqueror, the ruler of many nations, and the restorer of his people, by causing his temple to be built, and the city of *Jerusalem* re-inhabited. For that *Cyrus* had seen those prophecies, the thing is plain, not only from the testimony of *Josephus*, Antiq. lib. xi. c. 1. but from the recital that is made of them in the decree itself, *Ezra* i. 2. and if so, who should be so proper to shew them to him, and to recommend the accomplishment of them to his princely care, as *Daniel*, who had so great credit with him, and so passionate a concern for the restoration of *Sion*? *Prideaux's Connection*, anno 538.

†^a Some are of opinion, that among the sacred

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number of 5400 ||,) which Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the former house, brought to Babylon, and placed in the temple of his god Bel, he ordered his treasurer to restore ; and wrote letters * recommendatory to the governors of several provinces to assist the Jews in their undertaking.

The encouragement which was given them by virtue of this decree, made the Jews soon gather together out of the several parts of the kingdom of Babylon, to the number of forty-two thousand three hundred and sixty, which, together with their servants, (who were seven thousand three hundred and thirty-seven more) amounted in all to forty-nine thousand six hundred and ninety-seven persons. For, not only those of Judah and Benjamin, but several also of the other tribes that had been carried away by Tiglah-Pileser and Esarhaddon, yet still retained the true worship of God in a strange land, took the benefit of this decree to return into their own country.

The chief leaders of these returning captives were Zerubbabel and Joshua. Zerubbabel †, (whose Babylonish name was Sheshbazzar) was the son of Salathiel, the son of Jehoiakin king of Judah, who was kept so long a captive in Babylon ; and Joshua was the son of Jozadach, the son of Seraiah, who was high priest when Jerusalem was destroyed, and put to death by Nebuchadnezzar at Riblah in Syria ; so that the former of them was descended from the regal, and the latter from the pontifical family in a direct line. Zerubbabel was made governor of the land by a commission from Cyrus ; Joshua of course succeeded to the chief priesthood ; and with them were joined several others, as assistants for settling all affairs both in church and state.

On the first month of the Jewish sacred year, (which is called Nisan, and answers to part of March, and part of April in our calendar) the people arrived in Judea ; and having dispersed themselves according to their tribes and families, in their several cities,

things which Cyrus ordered to be restored, the ark of the covenant was one ; but it nowhere appears, that this ark was carried from Jerusalem to Babylon. They tell us, indeed, that, in the second temple, sacrifices were offered as in the first, and all solemn days observed, especially the great day of expiation, when the law ordained, that the blood should be sprinkled before the mercy-seat ; and the mercy seat, say they, was part of the ark : But besides that the ark, without the Shechinah, or Divine glory (which was then withdrawn), would have been of no great significance, the Jews universally acknowledged that the ark was one of the five things that were wanting in the second temple.

|| The sum total of the vessels, as they are named in Ezra i. 9, 10. do not amount to half this number ; and therefore some have thought, that there must be a numerical error, either in one place or the other ; whilst others suppose, that, as in 2 Chron. xxxvi. 18. Nebuchadnezzar is said to have carried away all the vessels, both great and small, in this detail the larger vessels only, and such as were of great value, are mentioned, but that the gross sum comprehends all, and amounts to the number specified. *Patrick's Commentary* on Ezra i. 11.

* Josephus has recorded one, which is directed to the governors of Syria, in the following manner.

“Cyrus the king, to Sysina and Sarabasan, sendeth greeting :

Be it known unto you, that I have given leave to all the Jews that are in my dominions to return to their own country, and there to rebuild their capital city, with the holy temple at Jerusalem, in the same

place where it stood before. I have likewise sent my treasurer Mithridates, and Zerubbabel the governor of Judea, to superintend the building, and to see it raised sixty cubits upward from the ground, and as many over ; the walls to be three rows of polished stone, and one of the wood of the country, together with an altar for sacrifices, and all this to be done at my charge.—It is my further pleasure, that they receive entire to themselves all the profits and revenues that were formerly enjoyed by their predecessors, and that they have an allowance paid them of 205,500 drachmas, in consideration of beasts for sacrifices, wine, and oil, and 2500 measures of wheat in lieu of fine flour, and all this to be raised upon the tribute of Samaria ; that the priests may offer up sacrifices according to the laws and ceremonies of Moses, and pray daily for the king and the royal family, and for the welfare and happiness of the Persian empire. And let no man presume to do any thing contrary to the tenor of this my royal will and proclamation, upon pain of forfeiting life and estate.” *Jewish Antiquities*, lib. 11. c. 1.

† In the time of the captivity, it was a common thing for the great men of Judah to have two names ; one of their own country which was domestic, and another of the Chaldeans which was used at court. Zerubbabel was born in Babylon ; and his name, which signifies an *exile*, or *stranger in Babylon*, imports the misery of the people of Israel at that time ; but *Sheshbazzar*, which is a compound of two words, signifying *fine linen* and *gold*, seems to be a name of a better omen, and to denote their future more flourishing condition. *Patrick's Commentary*.

they set about the rebuilding of their houses, and the cultivation of their lands, after they had lain desolate from the murder of Gedaliah, two and fifty years. On the seventh month, (which is called Tizri, and answers in part to our September and October) all the people, from their several cities, met together at Jerusalem, and on the first day of that month there celebrated the † feast of the trumpets. On the tenth was the great day of expiation †², when the high priest made atonement for all the people; and on the fifteenth began the feast of tabernacles †³, which lasted till the twenty-third. Du-

From Jer. xl.
7. to xlv. all
Daniel, and
from Ezra i.
to v.

† The first day of the month Tizri was the beginning of the Jewish civil year, and on it was the feast of trumpets, so called, because it was proclaimed by sound of trumpet; but upon what occasion it was at first instituted, the Scripture is silent. Theodoret, (Quæst. xxxii. in Levit.) is of opinion, that this was in memory of the thunder and lightning upon Mount Sinai, when God gave his law from thence. The ancient Rabbins will have it, that it was in remembrance of the deliverance of Isaac, in whose stead Abraham sacrificed a ram; but some modern Jews maintain, that it was in memory of the world's creation, which they accordingly assert was in the beginning of autumn; and, as they hold it by tradition, that on this day God particularly judges all the actions of the foregoing year, and disposes all the events of the year following, for this reason they generally apply themselves for the whole eight days preceding this feast to the works of penance and mortification. On the feast itself (which lasts for two days) all labour and business is suspended, and (while sacrifices were in use) the Jews offered, in the name of the whole nation, a solemn holocaust of a calf, two rams, and seven lambs, all of the same year, together with the flour and wine that usually went along with such sacrifices: but, instead of that, they now go to the synagogue, where they repeat several prayers and benedictions, and having taken the Pentateuch very solemnly out of the chest, and read to five persons the sacrifice that used to be performed on that day, they sound twenty times upon an horn, sometimes very low, sometimes very loud; and this, they say, makes them think of the judgments of God, to intimidate sinners and put them upon repentance. *Calmet's Dictionary* under the word *trumpet*.

†² This was one of the principal solemnities of the Jews; and the ceremonies to be observed hereon were such as these.—The high priest, after he had washed not only his hands and feet, (as usual in common sacrifices) but his body likewise, dressed himself in a plain linen garment like one of the priests, and had neither his purple robe, his ephod, nor his pectoral on, because he was going to expiate his own as well as the people's sins. He first of all offered a bullock and a ram for his own sins and those of the other priests, putting his hand upon their heads, and confessing his own sins and the sins of his house; then he received from the princes of the people two goats for a sin-offering, and a ram for a burnt-offering, to be offered in the name of all the people. By lots it was determined which of the two goats should be sacrificed, and which set at liberty; and therefore, after that he had perfumed the sanctuary with some burning in-

cense, he took of the blood of the bullock which he had sacrificed, and dipping his finger in it, sprinkled it seven times between the ark and the veil which separated between the Holy of Holies and the body of the tabernacle or temple. After this, he came out again, and having sacrificed the goat upon which the lot was fallen, he returned with some of its blood into the sanctuary, and there sprinkled it as he had done before: then coming out again, he sprinkled both sides of the court with the blood of the goat; and so proceeding to the altar of burnt-offerings, he wet the four horns of it with the blood of the goat and the bullock, and sprinkled it seven times with the same. After all these ceremonies were finished, the goat that was to be set at liberty, (which was commonly called the scape-goat) was brought to the high priest, who put both his hands upon its head, and having confessed all his own sins, and the sins of the people, delivered it to persons appointed to that office, who carried it into the wilderness, and left it upon the brink of a precipice at twelve miles distance from Jerusalem. After all which, the high priest washed himself all over again in the tabernacle or temple, and putting on his pontifical dress, sacrificed two rams for a burnt-offering, one for himself and the other for the people; and so concluded the day with reading the law, and giving the blessing to the people; who all upon this occasion behaved with great devotion, fasted punctually, and returned home with a full persuasion and assurance that their sins were entirely done away and expiated. The modern Jews, who have no sacrifices, content themselves with reading in Leviticus what relates to the solemn service of this day, and the ceremonies concerning the scape-goat. They in like manner fast very strictly, and pray very devoutly, until the conclusion of the day, when, having received the Rabbins' blessing, they go home fully satisfied that all their iniquities are pardoned: for their standing maxim is, that repentance, though accompanied with a resolution of living well, "does but suspend sins; whereas the feast of expiation does absolutely abolish them." The reader that is desirous to know more of this, may consult *Basnage's History of the Jews*, and *Calmet's Dictionary* under the word *expiation*.

†³ This was one of the great solemnities of the Jews, wherein all the males were obliged to present themselves before the Lord. In Hebrew it is called *Chag hassuchoth*, the *feast of tents*; because it was kept under green tents and arbours, in memory of their dwelling in tents in their passage through the wilderness, and immediately after the harvest, in grateful acknowledgment to God for the fruits of the

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ring all which solemnities, the people staid at Jerusalem; and to promote the restoration of God's worship in that place, the free-will offerings which they made upon that occasion (besides an hundred vestments for the priests) amounted to sixty-one thousand drachms of gold, and five thousand minas of silver, which in all comes to about † seventy-five thousand five hundred pounds of our money; and with this fund they began the work of rebuilding the temple.

To this purpose, having employed the first year in preparing materials and providing workmen, in the second month of the second year (which answers in part to our April and May) they laid the foundation of it with great joy and solemnity; only the old men, who had seen the glory of the first temple, and had no expectation that this, which was now a-building by a few poor exiles, lately returned from their captivity, would ever equal that which had all the riches of David and Solomon (two of the wealthiest princes of the East) expended on it, wept at the remembrance of the old, whilst the others rejoiced at the laying the foundations of the new temple.

Whilst the Jews were going on with this work, the Samaritans, who were planted in several cities of Israel in the room of the Israelites, whom Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, had long before carried away captive, hearing that they were about rebuilding their temple, came to the governor Zerubbabel, and desired to join with them in the work, alleging that they worshipped the same God that the people of Judah did. The governor, however, and the chiefs of the families of Israel, would by no means allow them to have any share in the work, being apprehensive that they, who were no better than idolaters †² notwithstanding they pretended to worship the God of Israel, might have some evil design in the offer of their service, and therefore they absolutely refused them; which so exasperated the other, that, from that very moment, they made it their endeavour, as much as in them lay, to obstruct the work: And though they could not alter the decree which Cyrus had made in favour of it; yet, by bribes and underhand dealings with his ministers, they, in a great measure, defeated its effect. So that, for

earth which they had lately gathered in. It was observed for seven days; and, of the several sacrifices which were appointed for each day, we have a punctual account in the book of Numbers, chap. xxix. 12, &c. The modern Jews, not having now an opportunity of going to the temple, and performing all the ceremonies prescribed by Moses, make (each for himself) in some open place a bower or arbour of the branches of trees of such a determinate height, hung round about, and adorned as much as they can; where they eat and drink, and pass at least as much time as they do in their houses for all the days of the festival; but such as are old or sick are excused, and when it rains very hard, they are permitted to retire to their houses. On the first day of the feast, they take one branch of palm, three of myrtle, and one of willow, bound together, which they carry in their right hand, and having a branch of citron with its fruit in their left, they thus make four turns about the reading desk in their synagogues. On the seventh day, (which is accounted more holy than the rest) they rise with the sun, and going to the synagogue, sing abundance of prayers (which they repeat all the feast) with prodigious rapidity, as supposing that, during their journey, they were obliged to make haste even in the service of God. On the eighth (for they have added two days to what Moses at first prescribed) they get their friends together, and give them an entertainment; and on the ninth, which

they call "the joy of the law," they complete the reading of the Pentateuch, according to the order of its sections. *Basnage's History of the Jews, and Calmet's Dictionary* under the word *Tabernacles*.

† For every dram of gold is worth ten shillings of our money, and every mina of silver nine pounds; for it contained sixty shekels, and every shekel of silver is worth three shillings of our money. From whence it appears, that the Jews were not made such poor slaves in Babylon as wrought for their lords and masters, but had some of them very considerable offices at court, and all liberty to trade, and get riches for themselves; and consequently that there may not be all the truth imaginable in that common saying among them, viz that they were only the bran, i. e. the dregs of the people, who returned to Jerusalem after the end of the captivity, and that all the fine flour staid behind at Babylon. *Prideaux's Connection*, anno 536.

†² For although, from the time that they had been infested with lions, in the days of Esarhaddon, they had worshipped the God of Israel, yet it was only in conjunction with their other gods whom they worshipped before; and therefore, notwithstanding their worship of the true God, since they worshipped false gods too at the same time, they were, in this respect, idolaters; which was reason enough for the true worshippers of God to have no communion with them. *Prideaux's Connection*, anno 534.

several years, the building went but slowly on, and, upon the death of the prophet * Daniel, who was a powerful advocate for his countrymen at the Persian court, and the death of their great benefactor Cyrus*², which happened not long after, it was quite intermitted, until the second year of the reign of Darius the son of Hystaspes, wherein it was reassumed.

* From Jer. xl. 7. to xlv. all Daniel, and from Ezra i. to v.

THE OBJECTION.

“**BUT** what credit soever Daniel might have with Cyrus the Persian and with the kings of Babylon, his predecessors, as a state-minister and politician, it is certain that he never was looked upon, even by his own countrymen, as a prophet ; nor was the book which goes under his name ever received into their canon of Holy Writ. The truth is, the method of his education was abhorrent to the spirit of prophecy. He was instructed

* We do not find that Daniel took the advantage of the edict which Cyrus made in favour of the Jews; and therefore we may suppose, that, as he did not return with them to Jerusalem, the king might require his continuance with him, and Daniel might the rather consent to it, as having thereby a better opportunity to befriend his countrymen upon any exigence. To this purpose, it is highly probable that he attended the Persian court, which, after the taking and defacing of Babylon, resided in summer at Shushan or Susa, and in winter at Ecbatana. In the palace of Shushan, Daniel (as himself tells us, chap. viii. 1. &c.) had several visions. In this city (as Josephus informs us, *Antiq. lib. 10. c. 12.* where, instead of Ecbatana, St Jerom reads Susa) he built a famous edifice, finished with such exquisite art, that it continued fresh and beautiful in his days ; and in this city the common tradition is, that he died in the third or fourth year of Cyrus, and about the 91st year of his age ; for, even to this day, (as we learn from Benjamin's *Itinerarium*,) the inhabitants of the place (at present called Tuster) shew his monument. But the most valuable monument left behind him is in his writings, whereof the Jewish historian gives us this character : “ He had this peculiar blessing attending him, that he lived in great reputation both with prince and people, and, when he died, left an immortal memory behind him. His writings, which are still extant, and in common use, we keep as a sure pledge that he had an intimacy and conversation with God : —For, whereas other prophets were more employed in foreboding calamities and ill news, which drew upon them disgrace from princes, and hatred from the people, Daniel, on the contrary, foretold nothing but happy events, and what was agreeable ; so that the nature of his predictions was such as gained him the good will of all, and such the certainty of them, as gained him a ready credence with all : Which (as the historian remarks) may serve not only to establish a veneration for the memory of a man whom God so

signally honoured, but to confound likewise the impious doctrines of the Epicureans, which will not allow of any over-ruling Providence interposing in the government and preservation of the universe, but will have the whole course of sublunary things to be nothing more than one grand huddle of contingencies. For when I consider the prophecies of Daniel, (says he,) I cannot but blame the ignorance or irreverence of those who make it their profession to decry Providence, as if God took no care of us, since it is impossible to conceive how there should be such a correspondence between the things foretold at one time, and fulfilled so many ages after, if, according to their opinion, every thing were left to run at random, and fall out at hap-hazard.” *Jewish Antiq. lib. x. c. 12.*

** It is generally agreed by historians, that Cyrus was much about seventy years old when he died ; but then they widely differ among themselves as to the manner of his death. Some say that he was taken in an engagement and hanged ; others, that he died of a wound which he received in his thigh ; and others, that he was killed in a battle with the people of Samos. Herodotus, Justin, and Valerius Maximus relate, that, in his war against the Scythians, falling into an ambush which queen Tomyris had laid for him, he was taken prisoner, and, with insult enough, had his head cut off by her order ; but Xenophon's account is, that he died peaceably in his bed amidst his friends, and in his own country ; as, indeed, there is little reason to think, either that so wise a man as Cyrus should, in his advanced years, engage in so desperate an undertaking as this Scythian expedition is represented on all hands, or that, had he died in Scythia, his mangled body could have ever been got out of the hands of these barbarians to be buried at Pasargada in Persia, as most authors agree it was, and where his monument was to be seen in the time of Alexander the Great ; *Cabmet's Dictionary* under the word *Cyrus* ; and *Pridæaux's Connection*, anno 530.

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in the learning of the Chaldeans, and (*a*) bred among a set of magicians, sorcerers, and astrologers, whom, in their different faculties, he is said (*b*) to have vastly surpassed, and was therefore (*c*) made their president: But though with these qualifications he might have set up for a top conjurer, yet who would ever have suspected his taking upon him the character of a prophet?

(*d*) The law of Moses threatened with immediate death, not only the professors of magic, but every one who resorted to them. The people whom God had expelled from Canaan were diviners, soothsayers, observers of times, and interpreters of dreams (*e*), whom he declares to be his abomination; and therefore we may justly wonder that Daniel, who seemed to be so scrupulous in other matters, (*f*) as not to dare to eat of the meat which the king had appointed for him and his companions for fear of pollution, should not much more fear to be defiled, by living in community with such as taught these black arts, and by becoming himself one of their disciples; and much more may we wonder how he comes to deserve so high a commendation for that very thing, viz. (*g*) his understanding visions and dreams, for which other pretenders to that kind of knowledge were accounted an abomination.

(*h*) 'In all matters of wisdom and understanding that the king enquired of them (his companions), he found them ten times better than all his magicians and astrologers,' and yet Daniel is represented as a proficient far surpassing the rest; which perhaps may help to unfold the secret why, when the other three were cast into the fiery furnace, it was thought proper to exempt him, namely, because the college of magicians might be loth to lose an adept so renowned for his age, and who was like to prove so great an ornament to their body.

However this be, it is certain that the author of the book which goes under Daniel's name was never a prophet, but a certain historian who lived some hundred years after Daniel's time; and, relating events which a long while before were passed and gone, made use of allegories and a symbolical way of expressing himself, merely to give his writings the air of prophecies. (*i*) For if the ancient Daniel, who was carried away in the Babylonish captivity, was the author of this book, how comes it to pass that he mistakes the very names of the princes whose courts he lived in, and uses so many words derivative from the Greek, which was a language unknown to the Jews till a long while after this captivity? How comes he not to be found (as well as other books of the Old Testament) in the version of the Seventy; not to be named among the prophets recited in Ecclesiasticus (*k*); nor so much as taken notice of by Jonathan, who is supposed to have made, some time before our Saviour's coming, his paraphrases upon the books of the prophets?

Had he been thought of canonical authority, it is scarce imaginable how he could have been passed by in this dishonourable manner: But the truth is, the Jews, to do themselves credit, were great composers of books under the names of their prophets, and particularly under the name of Daniel. We have several spurious pieces, such as the Song of the Three Children, the stories of Susanna and the two Elders, and of Bel and the Dragon, extant at this day; and, in like manner, have reason to believe that the author of the book of Daniel was a counterfeit, who lived about the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, and wrote of things past in a prophetic style; especially considering, that the way of representing large scenes of affairs, by such images and symbols as he makes use of, is entirely unlike the books of the other prophets, but vastly conformable to the mode of writing which at that time prevailed in the schools of the Greeks.

Æsop's lion indeed may be a fit emblem of a lawless tyrant, or his fox of a crafty

(*a*) Dan. i. 4.
(*e*) Deut. xviii. 12.
(*i*) Collins's Scheme of Literal Prophecy.

(*b*) Ibid. ver. 17.
(*f*) Dan. i. 8.

(*c*) Chap. ii. 48.
(*g*) Ibid. ver. 17.
(*k*) Chap. xlix.

(*d*) Levit. xx. 6.
(*h*) Ibid. ver. 20.

politician ; but where is the sense of (a) a lion with eagle's wings, or a bear with three ribs in his mouth ; of a leopard with four heads, or another beast different to all these, with eyes in his horns ? A ram with two horns (though the one may chance to be higher than the other) is not so incongruous a matter ; but an he-goat, casting down the host of heaven, and trampling upon the very stars, is a mad hyperbole, and can have nothing resembling it in nature. (b) The angel indeed may pretend to unfold the mysteries couched under these dark hieroglyphics, but what he says upon that head conveys no more knowledge to the reader than does his (c) famous explication of the seventy weeks, which has ever since been a rack to commentators, and enough to crack brains innumerable to comprehend it.

From Jer. xl.
7. to xlv. all
Daniel, and
from Ezra i.
to v.

The truth is, the very notion of a revelation implies that all things in it should be made plain. An obscure discovery of this kind seems to be a contradiction in terms : And therefore we can hardly blame those of the Jewish Sanhedrim, who were for suppressing the prophecies of Ezekiel, (as well as his brother Daniel's), (d) because the vision of the mysterious chariot in the first chapter, and the story of Gog and Magog towards the conclusion of the book, they could not but look upon as a strange rhapsody of unintelligible jargon.

But it is not a greater flaw in a revelation to be unintelligible than it is to be absurd and contradictory ; and therefore when, in comparing the gross sum and particulars together of the people that returned from the captivity, we find the latter fall short to the number of above twelve thousand persons, we cannot but think that some error has crept into the text itself. When we find (e) fourscore Israelites coming with ' offerings and incense in their hands to bring them to the house of the Lord,' when they could not but know that it was utterly destroyed above six months before, we cannot but conceive that herein must be some small slip of memory in the sacred penman ; and (f) to introduce the elders of Israel as disturbing the public joy at the laying of the foundation of the temple, with their cries and tears, when thankfulness (though but for small beginnings) would have much better become them, is far from placing these venerable rulers of the people in any advantageous light."

THAT there was such a person as Daniel of the Jewish captivity in Babylon, famous for his discovery of future events, and for his great piety and devotion towards God, can hardly be denied ; that the discourses and predictions of a person so highly in favour with God should be put in writing, either by himself or some other, and when committed to writing should be carefully preserved, it is reasonable to believe ; and that the book which has descended to us contains the revelations and other accounts of things which God was pleased to communicate to him, will sufficiently appear by the sequel.

ANSWER.

The character which the prophet Ezekiel gives his contemporary Daniel, (g) is his singular prevalence with God in prayer ; and whoever looks into the book that goes under his name, will find its author verifying (h) this character, and his success in this particular exemplified in several instances. (i) His deliverance out of the den of lions, and that of his companions out of the fiery furnace, (facts that are recorded in the present book), are expressly mentioned in the prayer of (k) old Eleazar in Egypt, under the rage of Ptolemy Philopater against the Jews, and (l) of Mattathias (the father of the Maccabees) in Judea, under the persecution of Antiochus Epiphanes ; and their ex-

(a) Dan. vii. 4.

Humano capiti cervicem pictor equinam
Jungere si velit, et varias inducere plumas,
Undique collatis membris, ut turpiter atrum
Desinat in piscem, mulier formosa suprenè ;
Spectatum admissi risum teneatis, amici ?

Hor. de Art. Poet.

(b) Dan. vii. 17. and viii. 19.

(c) Dan. ix. 25.

(d) Chap. xxxviii. and xxxix.

(e) Jer. xli. 5.

(f) Ezra iii. 12.

(g) Ezek. xiv. 14.

(h) Dan. ii. 6. 9.

(i) Chap. iii. and vi.

(k) Josephus's Jewish Antiquities.

(l) 1 Maccab. ii. 60.

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amples (among other Scripture instances) are proposed as motives to confidence in God and constancy in their religion : (a) So that the Jews in those times took this book to be written by Daniel himself, and accordingly made use of it. Nay, long before these times (b) we find Nehemiah beginning his solemn prayer to God in Daniel's own words, almost with no variation. "O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him and keep his commandments;" which is a plain proof, not only that he looked upon this book of Daniel as true and authentic, but that he esteemed his manner of praying likewise not unworthy his imitation.

Josephus, we know, was a priest well versed in the law and in the Sacred Writings, whose authority he professes to follow through all his Antiquities; and yet he seems to prefer Daniel above other writers of that kind, and to give us a more particular account of his than of all the other prophecies of the Old Testament put together: For he informs us, (c) "That Daniel not only foretold future things, (which was common to him with other prophets) but that he set the time likewise for their coming to pass; (d) that this book therefore was held among the Sacred Writings, and (e) read in public assemblies (which is the peculiar privilege of canonical books) in his days, because the completion of the events he foretold gained him belief with all mankind." Nay, if we will give credit to this same Josephus, this book of Daniel's was looked upon as genuine, and of Divine authority, even in the days of Alexander the Great; otherwise the high priest had put a banter upon him, when, (f) at his coming to Jerusalem, and going into the temple, he shewed him a passage in it, wherein it was foretold, under the emblem of an he-goat with one horn overcoming a ram with two, that a certain king of Greece would conquer the Persians; which Alexander took to himself, and perhaps upon that very account might treat the Jewish nation with more clemency than he did their neighbours.

But however this be, it is certain that in and before the time of our blessed Saviour the Jews received the book of Daniel as authentic Scripture, without any suspicion to the contrary. For, whereas the name of the Messias, and of the Son of Man, which they applied to the Deliverer whom they expected, the title of the kingdom of God and of heaven, used for the state of things under that Deliverer, his coming in the clouds of heaven, his taking all judgment upon himself, and the resurrection of the dead, pursuant upon that his coming, are expressions manifestly borrowed from Daniel: These expressions were at that time the current language of the Jews, insomuch, that we find none of them surprised when they heard the Baptist telling them that "the kingdom of God was at hand, or our Saviour calling himself so frequently the Son of Man, and citing Daniel the prophet by name; which they certainly would have been, and thereupon raised no small clamour, had they perceived that he was obtruding a spurious book upon them for canonical.

Upon the whole therefore we may conclude, that since there confessedly was such a person as Daniel, whose character in the prophet Ezekiel agrees with what we find in our present Daniel; since this book of his has the testimony of Josephus (no incompetent judge in a matter of this nature), was commonly cited in the times of our Saviour, was referred to before the times of the Maccabees; nay, was thought genuine in the times of Alexander, and has received no small confirmation from the use and application which Nehemiah makes of it; either we must suppose, that all these persons, in their different generations, were mistaken, or else we must allow, that our present book of Daniel is no fictitious piece of later date, but the work of the prophet whose name it bears, and who lived in the age which the Sacred Records have assigned him.

(a) Bishop Chandler's Vindication of his Defence of Christianity.

with. Dan. ix. 4.

(c) *Antiq.* lib. xii. c. 11.

(d) *Ibid.* lib. x. c. 11.

(b) Compare Nehem. i. 5.

(f) *Ibid.* lib. ix. c. 8.

(e) *Ibid.* c. 12.

It is no valid objection, either against his personal or prophetic character, that he was educated in the learning of the Chaldeans, and became a remarkable proficient therein. The learning of the Chaldeans consisted chiefly in what they call astrology, or the knowledge of the celestial motions, the art of building, and the art of war. Some curious and superstitious arts that were abhorrent to the law of Moses, they were famous for practising; but there is no necessity for us to infer from thence, that Daniel and his friends were ever initiated in these; on the contrary, we may be allowed to argue thus:—That had there been any thing criminal in the method of their education, they who refused to “defile themselves with the king’s meat” would never have complied with it. They refused the king’s provisions, not only because he might probably have such things served up at his table as were prohibited by their law, but because it was customary likewise, in most nations, before their meals, to make an oblation of some part of what they ate or drank to their gods, as a thankful acknowledgment, that whatever they enjoyed proceeded from their bounty: So that every entertainment had in it the nature of a sacrifice; and therefore Daniel and his friends looked upon the provisions which came from the king’s table as “meats offered to idols,” and upon that account esteemed them unclean. But the same principle that moved them to this, would have restrained them from the study of the Chaldean learning, had any of their impious or unwarrantable sciences been imposed upon them.

From Jer. xl.
7. to xlv. all
Daniel, and
from Ezra i.
to v.

The king, indeed, is said (a) “to have found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers that were in his realm;” but these words in ancient times were not appropriated to the evil sense which they now bear, but signified, in the general, men of wisdom and learning, skilled in the knowledge of things natural and divine. (b) Those who in St Matthew are called *μαῖοι*, our translation has properly rendered *wise men*, because the evangelist seems to have given them that name, not as a note of infamy, but as an honourable title. And in like manner, why may not the words be here understood of such persons as employed themselves in the lawful search of natural causes and effects, of the curious products of the earth, and the regular motions of heavenly bodies? For when Daniel made intercession to the captain of the guard, that (c) the “wise men of Babylon might not be slain,” we can hardly suppose that all of these were such as studied unlawful arts and sciences, since he himself was afterwards made master and president over them.

Nay, even supposing that these wise men of Babylon made profession of some sciences whose only foundation was superstition and deceit, yet, why must their Hebrew disciples be obliged to pursue the same? Might they not follow such studies as best suited their genius and the principles of their religion? The same indulgence which they obtained from the master of the eunuchs with regard to their provisions, may well be supposed to have been granted them in relation to their studies, in case any difficulty of this kind had been imposed upon them. But there is no occasion for our imagining this. The masters of these occult sciences (as they call them) had many good reasons for not obtruding them upon their disciples; and Daniel and his companions, who were designed to attend in the king’s presence, were more properly to be educated in another way, viz. in the knowledge of the purity of the Chaldee tongue, of the arts of war and policy, of the state and revenues of the kingdom, and such other lighter and more polite accomplishments as would make their persons and services more acceptable at court than any proficiency in these abstruse matters could do. But, put the case, that they were at any time called to lectures in any of the sciences that were not so strictly warrantable, we cannot see why they might not be permitted to attend to them with the same spirit that (d) “Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians,”

(a) Dan. i. 20.
(d) Acts vii. 22.

(b) *Whitby’s Paraphrase* on Matth. ii. 1.

(c) Dan. ii. 24.

A. M. 3417, viz. (a) not with a purpose to follow them, or to square their lives or sentiments according to them, but purely to put themselves into a capacity, upon a proper occasion, to confute them, and with more advantage to expose their falseness and absurdity.
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It was not for any more excellent proficiency therefore in those black arts which were prohibited by the law of God, that Daniel obtained an exemption from the punishment of the fiery furnace, but either because he was absent upon some pretence or other (as most of the Jews might choose to be absent upon this occasion), or because he was not accused to the king, at this time, for refusing to worship the idol which he had set up, though he might be present at the dedication.

Nebuchadnezzar, (b) we read, had summoned all his princes, counsellors, governors, captains, and all other his officers and ministers, to be present and assisting at the solemnity of this dedication; and therefore it is not likely that Daniel, who was one of the chief of them, should be allowed to be absent; but his enemies thought it more advisable not to begin with him, because of the great authority he had with the king, but rather to fall first upon his three friends (whose promotion in the province of Babylon raised their envy), that thereby they might more successfully pave the way to his ruin. But the miraculous interposition of Providence in behalf of his friends quashed all farther accusations against him; and for this reason it is, that no mention is made of him in this whole transaction.

It is said indeed of him, (c) "that he had understanding in all visions and dreams," and dreams, we know, among the eastern people, were held in great regard. They observed them much, and applied to such persons as pretended to explain them for their interpretation. Nor can it be denied, that, in the earliest ages of the world, it was the received opinion, that such dreams as were attended with unusual circumstances, did portend and signify some future event; that they were frequently sent from God, (d) "who in a dream, in a vision of the night, speaks once, yea twice, to men," as Elihu affirms in Job. Now if dreams be significative, and often sent from God, it can hardly be thought that in all cases the interpretation of them should be unlawful; and therefore we may observe, that in that very place where Moses forbids the Hebrews to consult magicians and interpreters of dreams, he nevertheless tells them, (e) "that the Lord their God would raise up to them, from among their brethren, a Prophet like unto him, whom they should consult and hearken to." So that, though the Israelites were forbidden to make use of soothsayers or diviners, as the custom of the nations was to whose possessions they succeeded; yet they were permitted to address themselves to God and his prophets, in order to learn the explanation of their dreams, and the prediction of future events; consequently, there could be no crime in Daniel's applying himself to this kind of knowledge, since, whatever excellency he had this way, the Scripture takes care to ascribe it to the peculiar gift of God.

[That he was taught—even by the astrologers, much useful knowledge, can hardly be doubted; for those men could not have pretended to foretel future events from the conjunctions and oppositions of the stars or planets, without acquiring great knowledge in the useful and sublime science of astronomy, which the agricultural life of the Jews, and the perfection of their law, deprived them of almost every inducement to study. No Chaldean astrologer can have employed himself in more frivolous pursuits than were those of the *alchymists*, in the dark ages of modern Europe, in quest of the *philosopher's stone*; and yet to the *alchymists* we are in a great measure indebted for the origin of the science of chemistry, which has within these thirty years been carried to such perfection, and contributed so much to the comfort and elegance of civil society.

Even in the interpretation of dreams something might be learned from the Chaldean

(a) *Calmet's* Commentary on Dan. i. 17.
 (d) Job xxxiii. 14, 15.

(e) Deut. xviii. 15.

(b) Dan. iii. 2.

(c) *Ibid.* i. 17.

wise men. Neither the gods of Babylon, indeed, nor the conjunctions of the stars, could reveal any thing to the astrologers or soothsayers; but no man, who admits the Divine origin of any part of the Scriptures, can doubt, but that the true God occasionally revealed his will to the prophets in dreams and visions; and when he did so, he must have made use of such symbols or such language as was generally employed to denote the things intended. The narrowness of original languages, and the practice of hieroglyphical writing which seems to have prevailed in most nations—especially in the east—during some period of their existence, rendered it almost necessary to express occasionally one thing by another to which it was supposed to have some resemblance or analogy. In visions or dreams, whether sent by God or not, some *symbols* or *language* must have been employed; and the business of the *Oneirocritic* or interpreter was to ascertain the import of such symbols. The interpreter who practised by art could only guess at that import, and in nine instances out of ten was likely to guess erroneously; but he who interpreted by inspiration was in no danger of falling into error, though each symbol or word, taken by itself, must have had some meaning generally understood by those among whom such symbols and words were in general use, as well as by the prophet.

From Jer. xl. 7. to xlv. all Daniel, and from Ezra i. to v.

“The early *interpreters of dreams*, says Bishop Warburton, were not juggling impostors; but, like the early judicial *astrologers*, more superstitious than their neighbours, and so the first that fell into their own delusions. However, suppose them to have been as arrant cheats as any of their successors, yet at their first setting up, they must have had materials proper for their trade; which could never be the wild workings of each man’s private fancy. Their customers would look to find a known analogy, become venerable by long application to mysterious wisdom, for the ground work of their deciphering; and the decipherers themselves would as naturally fly to some confessed authority, to support their pretended science. But what ground or authority could this be, if not the mysterious learning of *symbolical characters*? The Egyptian priests, the first interpreters of dreams, took their rules for this species of DIVINATION, from their *symbolic* riddling, in which they were so deeply read;—a ground of interpretation which would give the strongest credit to the art, and equally satisfy the diviner and the consulter; for it being generally believed that their gods had given them *hieroglyphic writing*, nothing was more natural than to imagine, that those gods, who in their opinion gave *dreams* likewise, had employed the same mode of writing in both revelations (a).”

When the true God gave revelations by dreams, he, of course, made use of the symbols that were most likely to arrest the dreamer’s attention, and at the same time were generally understood; and in different countries he would make use of different *symbols* according to the practice of the people, for whose information the dream was sent. Thus, in Pharaoh’s two dreams, the symbols made use of were, in one, *seven kine*, and, in the other, *seven ears of corn*. In the hieroglyphics of Egypt the *ears* of corn denoted its fertility, and the *kine* its great tutelary patroness *Isis*. Thus far Pharaoh seems to have understood the dream without an interpreter; and hence arose his anxiety to understand the rest, as a matter that concerned the public. “Accordingly, when Joseph comes to decipher the dream, he does not tell the king that the two *sevens* denoted seven years in *Egypt*, but simply *seven years*;—the *scene* of the famine needing no deciphering.” In Nebuchadnezzar’s second dream, he saw a *fair and high tree*, of which the height reached to heaven; and this being the symbol of *Majesty in general*, very naturally made the proud monarch anxious to know what *particular* monarch it signified; and therefore the prophet Daniel begins his interpretation with saying—“The tree that thou sawest—is *THOU*, O king!” But if Daniel was intended by God, as he certainly was, to be an interpreter of the dreams sent by him to the king of Babylon—

(a) *Divine Legation of Moses*, book iv. sect. 4.

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the scourge by whom he chastised sinful nations—it is obvious that a knowledge of the *symbols* by which events were supposed to be represented in Chaldea, was a species of preparatory knowledge absolutely necessary to him. The symbols employed for this purpose by the Chaldean magi may have been different from those in use among the priests of Egypt; but whether they were or not, it seems evident that *hieroglyphical writing*, and all kinds of *symbolical representations of God and his attributes*, were absolutely prohibited by the Mosaic law. Daniel, therefore, must have been taught the import of the Chaldean symbols, to fit him for an important part of the office which he was destined to fill; and as God appears not on any occasion to work miracles for an object which can be attained by natural means, it is to be hoped that the deist will permit Christians to believe that Daniel might without sin be taught the meaning of the mysterious symbols of Chaldea by those wise men of that empire, among whom they were best understood. The sciences of *astronomy* and *chemistry* furnish many illustrious proofs of the power, wisdom, and goodness of the Creator and Governor of the world; these sciences have been successfully cultivated by philosophers in France, who seem not to acknowledge the moral attributes of the GREAT FIRST CAUSE—if indeed they allow any cause to be *first*; but surely an intelligent Christian clergyman, of a mind tolerably firm, might take lessons in astronomy and chemistry from such men, not only without incurring guilt or danger, but with great advantage to himself.]

Daniel indeed lived in great prosperity, and in the capacity of a prime minister, under some of the Babylonian and Persian monarchs; and therefore if, through ignorance, he has mistaken their names, or recorded any thing of them that is not true, this we allow will have a suspicious aspect upon the authority of his writings: but when it is considered how common a thing it was for the princes of the East, upon one occasion or other, to multiply their names, and, not only by foreigners, but even by their own people, to be called sometimes by one name and sometimes by another; how usual it was for them to continue the titles of honour, which were conferred in consideration of those great exploits, whereby the dignity of their family was originally raised, and to adopt them into the number of their own; how customary it was, upon their accession to the kingdom, for them to change their names, and yet the first and private name he still retained by most other people, while the imperial name appeared in public acts, and was used at home only. Whoever considers this, I say, will cease his wonder when, amidst such a variety of appellations for one and the same person, he finds this historian making use of one, and that of another, according as his fancy, his pronunciation, or the custom of the country where he lived, led him. Daniel, in all probability, calls the same person Darius Medus, whom the Greek historians call Cyaxares the Second: but when it is observed, that these historians agree with Daniel as to the main points of his narration, viz. (a) that Babylon was taken by an army of Medes and Persians, whereof the Medes, being the superior, were at that time named first; that Cyaxares, king of Media, assisted at the siege, and was treated by Cyrus as his chief; that, after a day of riot and revelling, the city was taken in the night-time, by diverting the course of the river Euphrates, and the king of Babylon slain in his palace; that Cyaxares, being old, and naturally inactive, chose rather to live at Echatana, the capital of Media, while Cyrus attended the affairs of the government of Babylon; and that Cyrus, upon his death, succeeded to the whole empire:—If we observe, I say, the exact agreement between these historians, as to the chief matters of fact, we may easily dispense with some small difference in point of names; especially considering that the authors lived at no less a distance than Babylon is from Greece, and that the Greeks consequently might make use of the name, which he went by in Media, as best known to them, which the Babylonians, after he had taken their city, changed into Darius Medus, or

(a) *Xenophon*, lib. v. and viii. and *Herodotus*, lib. i.

the Victorious Mede, and which Daniel, being a captive in the place, might, in conformity, call him.

It (a) may happen indeed, that there is now and then a word or two, in the book of Daniel, which may seem to have some analogy to the Greek tongue, and, with some little variation, may be derived from it; but then it is to be observed, that the words of this kind are, for the most part, technical terms, such as might slip into any language without being perceived, and such as a writer might properly enough use, without understanding any more of the tongue from whence they are borrowed. Architects and mechanics, we know, use to this day several Greek and Arabic terms of art in their respective professions; and yet they do not pretend to understand the language from whence they came: and why might not Daniel, speaking in terms of art, (as he certainly does, when he † names the musical instruments, very probably of the Grecian make, which were used at the consecration of Nebuchadnezzar's golden image; why might not he, I say, make use of words of a foreign extract, and, at the same time, be supposed a stranger to the other parts of the language? This I think is the common privilege of most writers; nor is the mixture of some Greek terms in the Chaldee language so difficult a matter to account for, if we will but allow what Grotius, upon the place, observes, viz. "That, before Daniel's age, many colonies, both of the Ionians and Æolians, having settled themselves in Asia Minor, (which lies contiguous to some provinces of the Eastern kingdoms) might, that way, communicate the names of what they invented, or improved, even as far as Babylon itself."

The translation of the Septuagint has been held in such esteem, that, to have any part of Scripture omitted in it, would give a just suspicion as if it had not been extant, or not known at the time, when those learned men undertook the work: but this is so far from being true in the case of Daniel, that we find the Septuagint version of him read publicly in our Saviour's time; that we find Justin Martyr (b), and Clemens Romanus, (c) (who both wrote before Theodotion's version was made *) citing passages out of it; that we find St Jerom (d) giving us several various readings, different from those in Theodotion, and sometimes from those of Aquila and Symmachus, out of it; and, at the same time, telling us, why this translation of Daniel was repudiated, and that of Theodotion substituted in its room by the doctors of the Church.

It was Origen indeed who first brought it into discredit, by comparing it with that of

(a) Bishop Chandler's Vindication of the Defence of Christianity.

† Our learned Bishop Chandler is fully of opinion that the names of the instruments, mentioned in Daniel iii. 5. are not Greek but Eastern derivations, and that from thence they did pass to the Greeks, who, with a little alteration, adapted them to their pronunciation or termination of words. For (as he argues) "That their names were at first given them in the country, where the instruments themselves were invented, can hardly be doubted: If therefore such instruments as are here specified were used in the East; if their names be proved to be barbarous; and if an Eastern root can be assigned for their derivation, which no Greek theme will suit so well," (all which he endeavours to prove in several instances) then may we be allowed to infer that the names of these instruments (whatever affinity they may seem to have to the Greek language) were originally oriental; which opinion is confirmed by the testimony of Strabo, lib. x. who assures us, that the names of musical instruments, such as nabla, sambuca, and harbitos, were derived from barbarous languages, by which the

Greeks denote the Eastern tongues. Vid. *Vindication of the Defence of Christianity*, and *Lowth's Commentary* on Dan. iii.

(b) Dial. cum Tryph. p. 87.

(c) Ad Corinth. Ep. i.

* [They certainly both wrote before Theodotion's version was made; but Justin wrote after the publication of Aquila's. He must therefore have quoted either from that version or from the LXX.; and the version of Aquila is, if possible, better evidence of the canonical authority of the book of Daniel than even the version of the LXX.; because he was a Jew, and translated the Hebrew Scriptures for the express purpose of giving such a version of the prophecies of the Messiah, as would render them inapplicable to Jesus of Nazareth. If such a man translated the book of Daniel, which we have reason to believe that he did, either he would have made such a version of it as Justin must have disdained to quote, or the authenticity of that book, in its present form, is incontrovertible.]

(d) In Dan. iv. 8.

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Theodotion from the original, in his Hexapla, which shewed its imperfections a little too plainly; but then its degradation proves, that, before this happened to it, it was all along used in the Christian Church.

The omission of Daniel's name, in the enumeration of the prophets, which we meet with in Ecclesiasticus (*a*), is of no great moment, because we find no mention made of Job or Ezra, and yet they both had books, that went under their names, as well as he. The truth is, the history of the book itself may give us some grounds to think, that Daniel's character might possibly have been in it at first, though, upon some occasion or other, it afterwards came to be dropped. Jesus the grandfather (as we read in the prologue) wrote it in several volumes, and left it behind him unfinished. The original fell into such hands as carried it into Egypt, where Jesus the grandson met with it, and having compiled it all orderly into one volume, upon account of the pains which he had taken with it, he joined his own name with that of his grandfather in the title-page: (*b*) but it fared with this as it does with other books, to lose in the translation, and to suffer by copyists; insomuch, that whoever will be at the trouble to compare the Greek editions with one another, and with the various translations, will discover words, parts of sentences, and whole periods, to be so frequently omitted, altered, contracted, explained, or enlarged, as to abate his wonder, that the mention of any person (though never so considerable) should be omitted in a book that is delivered to us so variously and imperfectly. But there may be another reason assigned for this omission. Most part of the Old Testament was written in Hebrew, which was the common language of Judea, and in it did Jesus the son of Sirach write this book of Ecclesiasticus. Now, as a great part of the books of Ezra and Daniel was written in Chaldee, which was a tongue not so well known in Judea, it may reasonably be supposed, that the author's ignorance of that tongue might be the true occasion, why he omitted these two great men, and all account of their writings, in his catalogue of the prophets.

There are sundry reasons likewise to be given, why we have no Chaldee paraphrase upon Daniel as well as the rest of the prophets: For besides that a good part of Daniel is in the Chaldee tongue, and upon that account might less need one; it is a general complaint among the Jews themselves, that a great many of their ancient Targums have been lost, and an acknowledged case, that some of their sacred writers (such as Ezra and Nehemiah for instance, men famous in the Jewish story, and the latter of them highly celebrated by the son of Sirach) never had any. The truth is, the frequent calamities which befel the Jewish nation, and dispersed them into other countries, made them negligent of their books; left them no leisure to transcribe long paraphrasts; and when, by mixing among other people, they had lost the knowledge of the language, left them no ability to do it: So that amidst this ignorance and confusion, it is no wonder if many valuable copies were lost, some of which † have since come to light; but there is reason to apprehend, that the Targum upon Daniel never will. For so much does this prophet speak of the Messiah, describe the signs, and define the time of his coming so precisely, that the Jews, perceiving the advantage which their adversaries the Christians might make of it, were under strong temptations, either to omit or suppress the paraphrase of a prophet so diametrically opposite to them. And, accordingly, we have a story from (*c*) one of their Rabbins, that savours not a little of some such practice, viz. "That when Jonathan had finished his Targum on Job, Proverbs, and the Psalms, and was going on to Daniel, he was restrained by a voice, which bad him give over there, lest the sons of men should learn from Daniel the time of the Messias."

However this be, (*d*) since Daniel is so far from being passed by in any dishonour-

(*a*) Chap. xlix.

(*b*) Bishop Chandler's Vindication, &c.

† It is but the other

day that the Targums of the two books of Chronicles were discovered Bishop Chandler's Vindication, &c.

(*c*) R. Aoruhadam in Zaccath's Jucnaism, p. 54.

(*d*) Bishop Chandler's Vindication, &c.

able manner, that even Jonathan himself, in his Targum on the other prophets, expresses a great regard to him, by applying predictions, found only in his book, to texts in other prophets that he was then interpreting; since, in doing this, he follows Daniel in his ideas, phrases, and words, and explains passages in other prophets by such as were plainer and fuller in his opinion in him, it certainly follows, that (however his paraphrase be lost) Daniel was in his esteem a prophet of equal, if not superior, credit to the prophets he was then commenting upon.

From Jer. xl.
7. to xlv. all
Daniel, and
from Ezra i.
to v.

Whether the Jews were more than other nations addicted to the publishing of spurious tracts, under the names of their great authors, and particularly under Daniel's name, it concerns us not to enquire; since the very supposition implies thus much, that with the Jewish church at that time, the writings of Daniel were held in high esteem (for, in such a case, who would chuse an inglorious father?) when these base pieces came out in his name. The having impostures fathered on him therefore is so far from being any prejudice to Daniel's genuine writings, that it rather redounds to the confirmation of their authority; since what was spurious did no sooner appear in the light, but it was despised, rejected, and condemned. The prayer of the three children was not read in all the copies of the Septuagint; the story of Susanna, in some manuscripts, stood apart from the book of Daniel, in others after it; and as for the fable of Bel and the Dragon, it was not intended by its first inventor to pass under the name of Daniel, but of one Habakkuk, the son of Jesus, of the tribe of Levi, till Theodotion, in his Greek edition of the Bible, thought proper to change its title.

The truth is, the Jewish church always looked upon these pieces as spurious, and therefore allowed them much the same place in their Scriptures that the Apocryphal books have in our English Bibles; but the genuine book of Daniel they held always in the greatest veneration, esteeming the author of it as one of the chief of their prophets, until Maimonides, a learned Jew of the XIIIth century, in order to bar all proofs that might be drawn from him in favour of Christianity, thought fit to degrade him from his prophetic character, and place him in the number of † hagiographical writers only.

Hard is the fate of a prophet, when the very clearness as well as obscurity of his writings must be imputed as an objection against his authority; but certainly we must allow, that it is as easy for an all-knowing God to foretel all circumstances of an event, or to reveal the whole series of events in their proper connection and succession, as to declare one single occurrence. Such knowledge, and such wisdom, are essential attributes of God: Nor can there be any absurdity in his imparting his knowledge of future events, with more or less reserve, to one man rather than another; only one would think, that the freer such communications were, and the more conspicuous the revelation, the more excellent should the prophet, whom God pleased to honour in this manner, be accounted. So unreasonable are the prejudices of those who make the clearness of prophecies an argument against them, and endeavour to exclude Daniel from the number of prophets, for a reason that best entitled him to that character!

“But what shall we say (a) to his dark and abstruse way of writing in other places; his figurative and parabolical, his enigmatical and emblematical style, his uncouth images and symbols, entirely unlike the writings of the other prophets, but vastly agreeable

† It is much to be questioned, whether such a distinction as hagiographical books was known in our Saviour's time. All the partition that we read of is “the law, and the prophets, and the rest of the books,” (Proleg. to Eccclus.) which in Luke xxiv. 44. are called the Psalms; and according to Philo (de Vit. Contemp.) “are hymns, and other books, conducing to the promotion of piety and knowledge.” This threefold distribution of the books of Scripture is taken

from the nature and subjects of the books themselves, and not from any supposed degrees of sacredness between them: And if the word Cethubim, or Hagiographa, was then, or rather in the next century, made use of, it was applied only as a general name for the poetical and moral books of Scripture, to which class neither Daniel nor any historical book was reducible, Bishop Chandler's Vindication, &c.

(a) Vid. Collins's Scheme of Literal Prophecy.

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587, &c.
or 586.

to that turn which the Jews took up when they came to be formed in the schools of the Greeks?" All the Greek authors that we are acquainted with are strangers to this manner of writing: They abound indeed in figures and allegories; but the symbolical and emblematical form was purely oriental, and what other prophets as well as Daniel, as occasion requires, pursue.

For doth not Isaiah foretel the destruction of the Egyptians under the image of God's (a) "striking with a great and strong sword the leviathan (or crocodile), and slaying the great dragon that is in the sea?" Does not Jeremiah (b) speak of the Assyrians under the name of a dove, because (c) Semiramis had made that bird the symbol of her nation? Does not Ezekiel prophecy of Pharaoh under the figure of (d) "a great dragon, that lives in the midst of the rivers;" of the king of Babylon under the emblem of (e) "a large eagle with great wings;" and of the Assyrian under the similitude of (f) "a tall cedar in Lebanon," exalted above all trees, and reaching the clouds with its top, &c. the very same figure (g) whereby the kingdom of Nebuchadnezzar was represented? It is the genius of the eastern people to be delighted with fiction and imagery, and (as Sir John Chardin in his description of Persepolis tells us) nothing is more common among their authors, than to call countries by the names of their emblems, which are, as it were, the arms of that nation; and, in forming these emblems, to make use, not only of natural animals, but of such as are chimerical and fabulous likewise, beasts with wings, and birds with four feet and long ears.

(h) "Among the figures upon the walls and pillars of an ancient temple in this * once famous metropolis of Persia, says he, there are some very monstrous for figure and size. A winged lion with a crown on his head; a winged lion flying on the back of a bull; the body of a horse with wings on his back; and a man's head covered with an high bonnet crowned, &c. In images and hieroglyphics, continues he, here one may see the wars of princes and countries, and their successes expressed. The beasts represent the people or land in war; their running at each other, their engagement; and the crown on the head of one of them, or his taking the other by the hair of the head and stabbing him, points out his victory."

Now, since this method of describing things by images was so customary in the age and place where Daniel was captive, it is reasonable to suppose, that he conformed himself to it, and that the fictitious animals which he makes mention of, were no improper emblems of the several empires whereof he writes. The ram, for instance, was the royal ensign of the Persians, (i) as Ammianus Marcellinus observes; their goat, since their king Carinus, was the arms of Macedon; and therefore how aptly does Daniel see a goat with a notable horn (for an horn (k) is always an emblem of power and domi-

(a) Isaiah xxvii. 1.

(b) Jer. xlviii. 28.

(c) Diodor. Sicul. lib. iii.

(d) Ezek. xxix. 3.

(e) Chap. xvii. 3. 12.

(f) Chap. xxxi. 3, &c.

(g) Dan. iv. 10, &c.

(h) Bishop Chandler's Vindication, &c. page 152.

* While Alexander lay at this place, he gave himself much to feasting and drinking for joy of his great successes. In one of these feasts, which he made for his chief commanders, he invited their mistresses likewise to accompany them; among whom was one Thais, a famous Athenian courtesan, who was then mistress to Ptolemy, afterwards king of Egypt. This woman, in the heat of her carousals, proposed to Alexander the burning down of the city and palace of Persepolis, in revenge to the Persians, especially for their burning of Athens under Xerxes; and as the whole company was drunk, the proposal was received with a general applause, so that every man took a torch, and

(with Alexander at the head of them) setting fire to the city and palace, in a short time burnt them both to the ground. Thus, at the motion of a drunken strumpet, was destroyed by this drunken king one of the finest palaces in the world; for that this at Persepolis was such, the ruins of it sufficiently shew, which are still remaining at a place near Shiras, named *Chebelminar*, which in the Persian language signifies *forty pillars*; and is so called, because such a number of pillars, as well as other stately ruins of this palace, are there still remaining even to this day. *Prideaux's Connection*, Anno 330.

(i) Lib. xix. And rams heads with horns, the one higher and the other lower, are still to be seen among the ruins of Persepolis, as Sir John Chardin takes notice in his travels.

(k) Deut. xxxiii. 17. Psal. lxxxix. 17.

nion), to which he gives wings, because of the quickness of his success, to (a) “run against a ram with unequal horns, and cast him to the ground,” when he foretels what the Mede and Persian empire should do, and suffer from the Macedonian Greeks? Upon the breaking of the great horn, on Alexander’s dying in the height of his triumphs and prosperity, how properly do (b) “four others come up towards the four winds of heaven,” to denote the division † of his empire among four kings, whereof Ptolemy had Egypt and the adjoining countries to the south; Antigonus had Asia to the north; Seleucus had Syria to the east; and Antipater Greece and Macedonia to the west.

From Jer. xl.
7. to xlv. all
Daniel, and
from Ezra i.
to v.

(c) “A little horn coming out of one of these, and waxing exceeding great towards the south and east, and pleasant land, nay, waxing so great, as to cast down some of the host of heaven, and of the stars to the ground, and so trample upon them,” may seem a wild extravagant rant; but when it is considered that all this is meant of Antiochus, who was afterwards called by his flatterers Epiphanes, though himself a vile person and usurper of the kingdom; that it is to represent him, as soon as he got possession of the Syrian kingdom, taking advantage of the youth of Ptolemy Philometer, and invading Egypt to the south; Armenia and Persia to the east; and Judea, which is here styled the pleasant land, and frequently described as a land flowing with milk and honey, that it is to represent him persecuting the Jewish church and nation, here styled the host of heaven; murdering the principal men of both, here called the stars; deposing the high priest, whose title is the prince of the host; profaning their temple, polluting their altar, abolishing their law, and establishing idolatry by a solemn edict, (d) as whoever has read of the mad and impious actions of Antiochus * must know: When this is considered, I say, a small allowance for the oriental manner of pompous writing will reduce these images to a tolerable size.

The plain truth is, princes and states were, in old times, painted by their symbols, which are therefore called their *γνῶσιματα*, and in after-ages came to be distinguished by writers under the name of such symbols, as well as by their proper appellations: and therefore “the lion with eagle’s wings,” signifying the strength of the Assyrian empire, and the celerity of its conquests; “the beast with three ribs in his mouth,” intimating the reduction which Cyrus made of Babylon, Lydia, and Egypt to the Persian monarchy; the “leopard with four wings and heads,” denoting Alexander and his four successors; and the “other beast with iron feet and ten horns,” representing the Roman empire,

(a) Dan. viii. 7.

(b) *Ibid.* ver. 8.

† Dr Prideaux is of opinion, that this partition of Alexander’s empire, to which the prophecy has relation, did not happen till after the battle at Ipsus, where Antigonus was slain, and whereupon the four surviving princes divided the conqueror’s dominions into four distinct kingdoms, whereof Ptolemy had Egypt, Lybia, Arabia, Cælo-Syria, and Palestine; Cassander, Macedonia and Greece; Lysimachus, Thrace, Bithynia, and some other provinces beyond the Hellespont and the Bosphorus; and Seleucus all the rest. *Prideaux’s Connection*, Anno 301. But others have made the division of his empire ensuant immediately upon his death. *Calmet’s Commentary* on Dan. vii.

(c) Dan. viii. 9, &c. (d) 2 Maccab. v. 24. &c.

* Many of the Heathen writers give us this account of him, viz. that he would frequently get out of the palace, and ramble about the streets of Antioch, with two or three persons only accompanying him; that in his rambles, he would drink with strangers, and foreigners, and even with the meanest and vilest of them; that when he heard of any young company met together to make merry, he would intrude himself among them, and revel away the time with them

in cups, and songs, and other frolics, without any regard to common decency, or his own royal character; that in these frolics he would often go out in the streets, and there scatter his money by handfuls, for the rabble to scramble for; that at other times he would go about with a crown of roses upon his head, and, in a Roman gown, would walk the streets alone, carrying a parcel of stones in his lap, to throw at those that should follow after; that he was much addicted to drunkenness and lasciviousness; was frequently found in the company of pathics and common prostitutes, on whom he would gratify his lust publicly, and in the sight of the people; and that having for his catamites two vile persons, called Timarchus and Heraclides, who were brothers, he made the former of them governor of Babylon, and the other his treasurer in that province. The short is, his freaks, follies, and vices were so many, that men were in a doubt whether he were a madman or a fool, though the former of these was generally thought his truest character; and therefore, instead of Epiphanes the Illustrious, they commonly called him Epimanes the Madman. *Prideaux’s Connection*, Anno 175.

A. M. 3417,
&c. or 4825.
Ant. Chris.
587, &c.
or 586.

and the ten kingdoms *, or principalities into which it was divided, was a language as well known to skilful readers at that time, as are the arms, the colours, and the field of escutcheons in these later days to heralds.

*² Porphyry, no doubt, was well acquainted with this hieroglyphic way of writing, because all the objection which he makes to these prophecies of Daniel, concerning the four empires, is, that they were too plain and perspicuous, and more like historical narratives of facts already done, than prophetic predictions of things to come. But however this enemy of Christianity might urge the plainness of the prophet's predictions in order to invalidate the authority of his book, it must not be denied, but that God, in his great wisdom, has so ordered the matter, (for the exercise of our faith and industry) and so framed the prophetic style, that there should be still some shade and remains of obscurity abiding upon the face of almost every prophecy, even after the time of its completion: and therefore, instead of being surprised at the great variety of computations which chronologers, and other learned men, have put upon the (a) seventy weeks mentioned in Daniel, we may much rather wonder how, at this distance of time, they have been able to come to any tolerable exactness.

The words of the prophecy are these:—"Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people, and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to anoint the Most Holy. Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore, and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the prince †, shall be seven weeks, and three score and two weeks; and the street shall be built again and the wall, even in troublous time; and after three score and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come, shall destroy the city and the sanctuary, and the end thereof shall be with a flood; and at the end of the war desolations are determined: and he shall confirm the covenant with

* Bishop Lloyd hath given us the following list of the ten kingdoms which arose out of the dissolution of the Roman empire, and the time of their rise. 1. Huns erected their kingdom in that part of Pannonia and Dacia, which from them was called Hungary, about A. D. 356. 2. Ostrogoths settled themselves in the countries that reach from Rhetia to Mæsia; even as far as Thrace, about 377, and afterwards came into Italy under Alaricus in 410. 3. Wisigoths settled in the south parts of France and in Catalonia about 378. 4. Franks seized upon part of Germany and Gaul, A. D. 420. 5. Vandals settled in Spain, and afterwards set up their kingdom in Africa, A. D. 407. 6. Suevians and Alans seized the western parts of Spain, A. D. 407, and invaded Italy 457. 7. Burgundians came out of Germany into that part of Gaul, called from them Burgundy, 407. 8. Herules, Rugians, and Thoringians settled in Italy under Odoacer, about 476. 9. Saxons made themselves masters of England and part of Scotland about the same time, 476. And, 10. Longobards settled first in Germany, A. D. 383, and afterwards succeeded the Heruli and Thuringi in Hungary. *Lowth's Commentary on Dan. vii. 24.*

*² This Porphyry was a learned heathen, born at Tyre, in the year of Christ about 230, and there called *Matchus*; but upon his going among the Greeks, he changed it to *Porphyry*, which is much of the same signification; for *Matchus* in the Phœnician language (which was then spoken at Tyre) signifies a king, as *πορφυρεος* in the Greek denotes one that wore

purple, which none but kings and royal persons were then permitted to do. He was a bitter enemy to the Christian religion; and therefore wrote a large volume against it, containing fifteen books, whereof the twelfth was wholly levelled against the prophecies of Daniel. But because the predictions of this prophet, concerning the several empires, were acknowledged, on all hands, to have been fulfilled, he did not go about to disprove it; on the contrary, he endeavoured to maintain, by the testimony of the best Greek historians then extant, that they were fulfilled so exactly, and so minutely, that it was impossible for them to be the predictions of the Daniel who belonged to the Babylonish captivity, and must therefore be the spurious composition of some later author. But this argument St Jerom, in his Comment upon Daniel, fully turns upon him. It is much to be lamented however, that not only this whole work of Porphyry is lost, but that also the books of Eusebius Apollinarius, and Methodius, which were wrote in answer to this heathen adversary, (to the great damage both of divine and human knowledge) have all undergone the same fate. *Frideaux's Connection*, Anno 164

(a) Dan. ix. 24.

† The colon, which in our English Bibles is placed after seven weeks in the middle of this sentence, should be placed after two weeks at the end of it; which wrong punctuation may possibly lead some people into an error in their computation.

many for a week; and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease; and, for the overspreading of abominations, he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate."

From Jer. xl.
7. to xlv. and
Daniel, and
from Ezra i.
to v.

Now, to set these words in a right light, we must consider, 1st, That the main design and intendment of them is, to foretel the coming of the Messiah, his abolishing the Jewish, and setting up a new and more perfect religion; which is so manifest to every common reader, that later Jews (to avoid the force of this one prophecy) have even adventured to exclude the whole book of Daniel from the number of inspired writers, and to pronounce a curse upon any that shall pretend to compute the time of the Messiah's coming. 2dly, It is agreed by most interpreters, that the seventy weeks here spoken of (according to the prophetic style) are to be taken for weeks of years, every one of which contained seven years, and so the seventy weeks will amount to 490 years; at the expiration of which term the matters contained in this prophecy were to have their accomplishment: but then the question is, At what point of time these seventy weeks, or, what is all one, the 490 years, either began or expired? for if we can but find out one of these periods, there will be less difficulty in stating the other. Now, 3dly, It seems pretty plain, that the several events specified in the beginning of this prophecy, viz. to finish or restrain transgressions, 2d, To make an end of sin, 3d, To make expiation, or reconciliation for iniquity, 4th, To bring in everlasting righteousness, 5th, To seal up, or complete, and "fulfil vision and prophecy," and, 6th, To anoint, or consecrate the Most Holy, were all accomplished in the great work of our salvation by the death and passion, and by the doctrine and resurrection of our Saviour Christ. For, being born without original, and having lived without actual sin, he truly was the Most Holy of all that ever bore our nature; and, being thereby fully fitted for this great work, "he was anointed with the Holy Ghost, and with power, to be our priest, our prophet, and our king."

As our priest, he offered himself a sacrifice upon the cross, and thereby made atonement for our sins, which is making an end of them, by taking away their guilt; and in so doing, working reconciliation for us with God. As our prophet, he gave us his gospel, a law of everlasting righteousness, and the only revelation we are to expect: And as our king, he sent his Holy Spirit into our hearts, to guide and influence us according to this law; whereby he has taken an effectual method to restrain, and extinguish in us, all manner of transgression; and, in doing all this, he has sealed up, i. e. fulfilled and thoroughly finished, all that, by visions and prophecies, had been before revealed concerning him.

Since (b) therefore all these events were brought to pass, and accomplished at the time of Christ's death, this must determine us where to fix the end of the weeks wherein these events were to be accomplished: and if the end of these weeks is to be fixed at the death of Christ, then, 4thly, This will determine us where to place the beginning of them, viz. 490 years before, † which is the very year and month †, ² wherein Ezra

(b) *Prideaux's Connection*, Anno 409.

† Most learned men agree, that the death of Christ happened in the year of the Julian period 4746, and in the Jewish month Nisan; and therefore, if we reckon 490 years backward, this will lead us to the month Nisan, and in the year of the Julian period 4256; which, according to Ptolemy's canon, was the seventh year of Artaxerxes's reign, in which the Scripture tells us (Ezra vii. 7.) that this commission was granted. *Prideaux's Connection*, Anno 578.

†² Others are of opinion, that the commission here intended was not that which was given to Ezra, but that which Nehemiah had from Artaxerxes, in the twentieth year of his reign, at which period they

place the commencement of these seventy weeks; which being reduced to 490 lunar years, bring us down to the time when our Saviour Christ was put to death. There are some variations indeed concerning the calculation of these years. Chronologers differ among themselves a little; but the greatest difference does not exceed nine or ten years; and yet even this Petavius, who has treated of the subject in his twelfth book de *Doctrinâ Temporum*, has endeavoured to accommodate, by shewing that the words of the prophecy of Daniel, concerning the "going forth of the command to restore and rebuild Jerusalem," ought to be understood of the complete execution of that order which was performed by Nehe-

A. M. 3417, had his commission from Artaxerxes Longimanus, king of Persia, for his returning to Jerusalem, and there to restore the church and state of the Jews.

&c. or 4825.
Ant. Chris.
587, &c.
or 586.

The only objection against this computation is,—that the words of the prophecy seem to denote a real building of the city, since it makes mention of its streets and walls ; whereas that work was executed upon the decree by Cyrus, several years before Ezra was in commission. But this objection will appear of little force, if once it be considered that figurative expressions are in a manner necessary in prophecies, and that nothing is more common in Scripture, than by Jerusalem in particular, to mean the whole political and ecclesiastical state of the Jews.

There is another difficulty observable in this prophecy, which deserves our attention, and that is, the division of the seventy weeks into three distinct periods, i. e. into seven weeks, sixty-two weeks, and one week, to each of which a different event is assigned. In the seven weeks, or forty-nine years, from the going forth of the commandment, the streets and walls of Jerusalem, i. e. the restoration and establishment of the church and state of the Jews, is to be accomplished. In the sixty-two weeks, or four hundred and thirty-four years more, the Messiah is to come, and make his appearance in the world ; and in one week, or seven years after this, he is to “ confirm a covenant with many, and cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease :” All which were literally fulfilled. For in the space of forty-nine years, which answers to seven weeks, the reformation and establishment of the Jewish church and state was carried on and completed, first by Ezra, in virtue of a decree granted in the seventh year of Artaxerxes, and afterwards by Nehemiah, in virtue of another, granted him by the same prince, in the twentieth year of his reign. From that time, in the space of four hundred and thirty-four years, which answers to sixty-two weeks, our blessed Saviour appeared in the world as the Messiah ; and for seven years after that, (which answers to the one week in the prophecy) first, by his forerunner John the Baptist, for the space of three years and an half more, he confirmed the covenant of the Gospel with as many of the Jews as were converted, and embraced these laws of everlasting righteousness which he published ; and at length, by the sacrifice of his most precious blood, made all other victims and oblations (which were but types and emblems of his) for ever cease and be abolished. As to the other part of the prophecy, it relates so evidently to the destruction of Jerusalem, that it needs no explanation. Whoever has read Josephus, cannot but observe that, by the destruction of the city and sanctuary, by the people of the Prince that was to come, who, with their armies and desolating abominations, should invade Judæa as with a flood, and, by a terrible and consuming war, bring utter ruin and destruction upon it, and upon all the people of the Jews that should dwell therein, can be meant nothing but Titus at the head of the Roman army, executing the wrath of God for the murder of his Son, our Saviour, upon that devoted city and people, in such a terrible and tragical manner as their historian has related.

Ezekiel indeed, according to the sentiment of some Rabbins, was a prophet of more

miah only ; and that the twentieth year of Artaxerxes, mentioned in Nehemiah i. 1. ought to be explained, not of the twentieth year of Artaxerxes alone, but of the twentieth from the time that his father made him his associate in the throne, which was ten years before his death : Which ten years being deducted from the number of years that elapsed from the decree of Artaxerxes in favour of Nehemiah, to the death of Jesus Christ, deliver the chronologers out of all their perplexities, and dispel all the difficulties that the few supernumerary years occasioned. *Calmet's* Dissert. sur les septante Semaines, &c. What the learned Bishop Lloyd's manner of computing these weeks is,

the reader will find fully explained and illustrated by Mr Bedford, in his *Scripture Chronology*, lib. vii. c. 1. and if he would have still farther satisfaction herein, he may consult Pererius upon Daniel, M. Basnage's Dissert. upon the seventy weeks, F. Hardouin's Dissert. on the same subject, and that of F. Frischmoult, in his *Thesaurus Dissertationum*, at the end of the great Critics. [Dr Hales's *Analysis of Ancient Chronology* is likewise well worthy of being consulted on the import of Daniel's *visions and prophecies* ; though the learned author, like many other modern interpreters, is too eager to launch into futurity, and to act the part of a prophet himself.]

obscurity than Daniel, and especially in the description of the chariot, (as they call the first chapter) so very intricate and abstruse, that they would not permit it to be read by any until they were arrived at the age of thirty. The design of the prophet in that chapter is, to represent the great and glorious appearance of God, coming to give him instructions in the management of his prophetic office ; and to this purpose, he makes use of images, foreign indeed to our manner of writing, but what are all significant and full of majesty. He represents God as seating himself on a radiant throne, supported by cherubims, moved by wheels of an uncommon make, covered with the canopy of heaven, and encircled with the rainbow : and though, in the description of the cherubims and wheels, there may be something not so agreeable to our way of thinking, yet we are not to suppose but that, in the whole, it was adapted to the age wherein the prophet wrote, and in each part perhaps did include an excellent moral. Angels, of what rank or denomination soever, are all ministering spirits, and the instruments of God's Providence in the government of the world ; and therefore are represented here as supporting his throne ; and in allusion, (a) very likely, to the triumphal chariots of Eastern princes, which are drawn by several sorts of beasts, they are said (b) " every one to have four faces." Their wings denote their readiness and alacrity ; their eyes, their sagacity and vigilance ; their hands, their prudence and dexterity ; their feet, their steadiness and resolution in performing the Divine commands ; and (c) " the noise of their wings when they went," expressed the terribleness of the judgments which they were to execute upon Jerusalem and all the Jewish nation.

From Jer. xl.
7. to xlv. all
Daniel, and
from Ezra i.
to v.

And in like manner, (d) the make and fashion of the wheels, which these cherubims actuate, show, that all the ways of Providence are uniform, and subservient to each other ; as (e) their going perpetually forward intimates, that Providence does nothing in vain, but always accomplishes its designs. (f) The largeness of the rings, or circumference of the wheels, denotes the vast compass of Providence, (g) " which reacheth from one end to another mightily (h)." Their being full of eyes implies, that the motions of Providence are directed by unerring Wisdom ; and (i) their moving when the cherubs moved, seems to demonstrate, with what readiness and alacrity all the instruments of Providence do concur in carrying on his great designs. Thus full of instruction is every little symbol in this description ! And therefore it is doing injustice to the character of the prophet, to find fault with his images, because they agree not with the present mode, or to censure his writings before we understand them.

His prophecy (k) concerning Gog and Magog is perhaps deservedly thought one of the most difficult passages that occur in the Old Testament ; and, accordingly, the conjectures about it have been various. It is generally agreed, however, that the words || Gog and Magog are not real, but fictitious names ; and therefore their wars with the people of God some have applied to the cruelties of Antiochus Epiphanes against the Jews ; others, to the persecutions of the Gentiles against the Christians ; some, to the irruption of the Goths and other barbarous nations into the Roman empire ; others, to the ravages which the Turks made in Asia and some parts of Europe ; and others

(a) *Lowth's* Commentary on Ezek. i.

(b) Ezek. i. 6.

(c) *Ibid.* ver. 24.

(d) *Ibid.* ver. 16.

(e) *Ibid.* ver. 17.

(f) *Ibid.* ver. 18.

(g) *Wisd.* viii. 1.

(h) *Ibid.* ver. 18.

(i) *Ibid.* ver. 19.

(k) Ezek. xxxviii. and xxxix.

|| Magog was the son of Japhet, Gen. x. 2. from whom the Scythians were generally supposed to be derived ; a people well known in the East for their frequent irruptions and devastations therein made, and who, for their rapine and violence, cruelties and

barbarities of all kind, for some time, passed into a proverb ; and therefore, whether we suppose Cambyases or Antiochus (as we shall see hereafter) to be the Gog in Ezekiel, the prophet's calling him by the name of a wild Scythian can be no objection, because scarce ever were any two men more cruel, more savage, and brutal in their passions, than they ; insomuch, that we may truly say, that, as the Scythians were the terror of all the East, so Cambyases and Antiochus were the horror and abomination of mankind. *Culmet's* Comment sur. Gog et Magog.

A. M. 3417, again, to those (as is prophesied elsewhere) oppressions, which, in the latter days, Antichrist shall bring upon the true professors of our most holy religion.

&c. or 4825.
Ant. Chris.
587, &c. or
586.

(a) The main current of interpreters will have the Gog in Ezekiel to be Antiochus; but then there are some exceptions to this opinion, that may be gathered from Ezekiel himself. For, whereas the Gog in Ezekiel (b) was to fall upon the mountains of Israel; (c) was to be buried in the east of the Mediterranean Sea; was to have an army destroyed (d) by their turning their swords upon one another; and (e) the Israelites were to gather the spoils, and burn their arms for several years: Whoever looks into the history of Antiochus, will see that he died at a little town called Taba, in the confines of Persia and Babylonia; that, upon his death, his army suffered no defeat, neither did the Jews reap any advantage by it, because his son Antiochus Eupater continued to oppress and harass them with wars as much as ever.

But if Antiochus was not the Gog in Ezekiel, the question is, Who was? And to resolve this question, we may observe, that (be the person who he will) the prophet speaks of him as a powerful prince, who should come from the north (f) with a numerous army. (g) made up of different nations, exasperated against the Jews, and with full intent (h) to plunder and ravage their country; but that he should be disappointed in his design, and (i) his army miraculously destroyed.

We may observe farther, that this event was to happen after the return from the captivity; because the prophet mentions it as a thing future: (k) "Thou shalt come into a land (speaking of Gog) that is brought back from the sword, and against a people who have lately returned from amidst the nations, where they had been dispersed;" which can be meant of none but the Jews; but (l) that it could not happen after the time of the Maccabees, because the Jewish history is, from thence, so very well known, that a transaction of this nature could not well escape us; and therefore we may conclude, that it was between the return from the captivity and the first appearing of the Maccabees, (a very obscure interval as to the Jewish affairs) that what the prophet relates of Gog and his adventures came to pass; and if so, we can see no prince or potentate to whom the characters which the inspired writers give of him, can so properly belong as to Cambyses, the son of Cyrus.

According to the accounts of all history, he was cruel and barbarous, excessively impious, and insatiably covetous. His indignation against the Jews he expressed (m) by a revocation of a grant which his father gave for the rebuilding of their city and temple. He led a large army into Egypt, composed of all the different nations (n) that Ezekiel mentions, who were overwhelmed (a great many of them at least) by the driven sands of the deserts. In his return from Egypt, (o) he died at Ecbatana in Palestine, at the foot of Mount Carmel, which faces the Mediterranean Sea, of a wound which he received by his sword's falling accidentally out of the scabbard; so that a great many lines of the picture, which the prophet draws of Gog, meet in Cambyses, though it must be acknowledged that all do not.

(p) What bids fair for this opinion, however, is the order and series of events which Ezekiel seems to have observed in his prophecies: For, having first foretold the taking of Jerusalem, the captivity of Babylon, and the desolation of Tyre, Egypt, and some other countries neighbouring upon Judea, he proceeds, in the next place, to the dissolution of the Chaldean monarchy, and the return of the Jews from their captivity. But before they are well settled in their native country, Gog and his numerous army are introduced to trouble their repose, and threaten their ruin; but that God interposes to

(a) Calmet's Dissert. sur Gog et Magog.

(d) Chap. xxxviii. 21.

ver. 2.

(l) Calmet's Dissert. ibid.

lib. iii.

(p) Calmet's Dissert. ibid.

(e) Chap. xxxix. 9, 10.

(h) Ibid. ver. 9, &c.

(m) Ezra iv. 19, &c.

(b) Ezek. xxxix. 4.

(f) Chap. xxxviii. 15.

(i) Ibid. ver. 22, &c.

(n) Ezek. xxxviii. 2, &c.

(c) Ibid. ver. 11.

(g) Ibid.

(k) Ibid. ver. 8.

(o) Herod.

rid them of this fierce enemy, who is said to have fallen in the mountains of Israel, he and all his army. It must be owned, indeed, that the writers of the life of Cambyse make mention of no intention in this prince to fall foul upon the Jews, nor do they say any thing of the destruction of his army, ensuant upon his death; but upon the supposition that the prophecy relates to him, God, who knew the evil disposition of that prince's heart towards the Jews (which no profane author could penetrate), has given us this part of his history: (a) "Thus saith the Lord, it shall also come to pass, that at the same time thou shalt think an evil thought, and shalt say, I will go up to the land of unwall'd villages; I will go to them that are at rest, that dwell safely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates, to take a spoil, and to take a prey, to turn my hand upon the desolate places that are now inhabited, and upon the people that are now gathered out of the nations." What became of his army after he was dead we cannot tell. Herodotus, who gives us the largest account of him, immediately after his decease passes to the history of the Magian who usurped his throne: And therefore we may suppose, (b) that as they consisted of so many different nations, and followed him only by compulsion, when once their head was gone, they crumbled into parties, quarrell'd, and, as (c) the prophet had foretold, turned their arms upon one another; which was no more than what (d) the Philistines did in the time of Saul, and (e) the Midianites when Gibeon judged Israel*.

From Jer. xl.
7. to xlv. all
Daniel, and
from Ezra i.
to v.

We have been so large in our answers to some of the last objections, that we have less room left for the reconciliation of some seeming inconsistencies that are alleged in this period of history: But a little will suffice for this.

For, 1. Whereas the number of the people returning from the captivity is much larger in the general sum than it is in the particulars, it is to be remembered, that not only those of Judah and Benjamin, but several also of the other tribes, took the benefit of the decree which Cyrus granted in favour of the Jews, to return again into their own land. That they did so is plain from the tenor of the decree itself, which extends (f) "to all the people of the God of Israel;" whereof, as Josephus informs us, Zerubbabel sent a copy into Media to the rest of the ten tribes, who, "together with the rest of the fathers of Judah and Benjamin," are supposed to be those (g) "whose spirit God had raised up to go:" And therefore the difference between the gross and the particular sums arises from hence,—(h) That in the latter, the tribes of Judah, Benjamin, and

(a) Ezek. xxxviii. 10, &c.

(b) Calmet's Dissert.

(c) Ezek. xxxviii. 21.

(d) 1 Sam. xiv. 20.

(e) Judg. vii. 22.

* This appears to me as probable an interpretation of the prophecies relating to Gog and Magog as any other; but modern interpreters explain these prophecies in a variety of ways. To give abstracts of them all would occupy much room, and be of very little use; for nothing seems to be more certain, than that prophecy was not given to enable us to foretell future events. The following account of Gog and Magog, as it is cautious and modest, can injure none of our readers, and may gratify some of them.

"GOG and MAGOG seem to be the general names of the northern nations of Europe and Asia, or the districts north of Caucasus or Mount Taurus, colonized by Gog, or Magog, one of the sons of Japheth (Gen. x. 2.), called by the Arabian geographers *Jéjuge* and *Majuge* (Rennel. Herod. p. 112.). Gog rather denotes the people, and Magog the land. Thus, Balaam foretold that CHRIST would be 'a King higher than Agag,' or rather Gog, according to the correcter reading of the Samaritan Hebrew Text, and of

the Septuagint version of Numb. xxiv. 7. And Ezekiel, foretelling a future invasion of the land of Israel by these northern nations, *Meshech*, *Tubal*, and *Togarmah*, styles Gog their chief prince, and describes their host precisely as *Scythian* or *Tartarian*, coming out of the North, all of them riding upon horses; bows and arrows their weapons; covering the land like a cloud, and coming like a storm in the latter ages. (chap. xxxviii. 1—17.) He also describes their immense slaughter, in the valley of the passengers on the east of the sea, thence called the valley of *Hamon Gog*—'the multitude of Gog.' (chap. xxxix. 1—22.) This prophecy seems also to be revived in the *Apocalypse*, where the host of Gog and Magog are represented as coming to invade the beloved city, and perishing with immense slaughter likewise in *Armageddon*—the Mount of *Megeddo*, or *Megiddo*." (Rev. xvi. 14—16. xx. 7—10.) Hales's Analysis, vol. i. p. 463.]

(f) Ezra i. 3.

(g) Ibid. ver. 5.

(c) Patrick's Commentary on Ezra ii. 6. and Pri-deaux's Connection.

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Levi, only are reckoned by their families; whereas in the former, all those of the other tribes that accompanied them in their return to Jerusalem are added.

This accounts for the difference between the general and particular sums in Ezra: And then, why the particulars in Ezra differ from the particulars in Nehemiah, the matter (according to a very competent (*a*) judge) is to be conceived and apprehended thus:—"That Nehemiah found the list and catalogue of those that came up in the first of Cyrus as it was then taken, and that he called over the names of the families as they lay in order there; that he observed the order of the old list, in calling them over and listing them, but took the real number of them as they were at the time when he numbered them; that some families were now more in number than they were when the first list was made, and some fewer; and some that were in that list were not to be found now; for some more of the same stock had come up from Babylon since the first numbering, and others, who had come up at first, and were then numbered, were now gone back again."

2. Whereas it is said of the fourscore Israelites, that they were (*b*) "carrying their offerings to the house of the Lord," when the house of the Lord at Jerusalem had for some time before been destroyed by the Babylonians; (*c*) why may we not suppose, that the place where the temple stood (even after its destruction) was held in such veneration, that the people who were left in the country after the general captivity, chose to offer their sacrifices and oblations there as long as they remained in the land; and that, having no priests at Jerusalem, they might go to Mizpah (where these servants of the Lord had, very probably, put themselves under the governor's protection) to fetch one from thence, in order to assist them in their religious offices *?

(*d*) Samaria, indeed, and the other parts from whence these devout persons came, lay to the north, and Mizpah to the south of Jerusalem, a little too far distant for them to go for a priest; and therefore others have imagined, that after the destruction of the temple, Gedaliah, by the advice of the prophet Jeremiah, and the priests that were with him, had established a tabernacle, and built an altar at Mizpah, where the people for the present might resort to pay their devotions and present their oblations, until, by some happy turn of affairs, their temple might come to be built again; and that this tabernacle and altar might, with propriety enough, be called "the house of the Lord."

We can hardly believe indeed, that after the temple was gone the people were to live without any place of religious worship; and therefore, considering that Mizpah was all along esteemed a place of more than ordinary sanctity; that after the return of the ark, there (*e*) "Samuel gathered together all Israel before the Lord;" that there he built an altar, and (*f*) "offered a sacrifice;" and that in the time of the Maccabees, when the Jews were in the same case as now, without a temple, and without an altar, they here (*g*) "assembled themselves together; for Mizpah (as the author of that history tells us) was the place where they prayed aforetime in Israel;"—we cannot but think that there is something of reality in the supposition, and that these eighty pious mourners were going to Mizpah, and not to Jerusalem, (*h*) when the bloody and perfidious Ishmael circumvented them †.

(*a*) *Lightfoot's* Chronology, page 146.

(*b*) Jer. xli. 5. (*c*) *Prideaux's* Connection, in the Notes, anno 588.

* [This is very probable and natural, and furnishes a solution which must, I think, have occurred to every reflective mind.]

(*d*) *Calmet's* Commentary on Jer. xli. 5.

(*e*) 1 Sam. vii. 5, 6.

(*f*) Ibid. ver. 9.

(*g*) 1 Maccab. iii. 46.

(*h*) Jer. xli. 6.

† [This is surely not so natural a solution of the difficulty as the former. The example of prophets,

who acted under the influence of the Spirit of God, could be no authority to private Jews for disobeying the express letter of their law. Now the law was, that the Israelites should bring their offerings to the place, not to any individual building on that place, which the Lord might choose. The place which he had chosen remained, though the individual temple built by Solomon was destroyed, and never was nor ever can be restored. The place, however, sanctified the second temple, and in the opinion of the modern Jews might sanctify a third. Its sanctity therefore must be

3. Once more: Whereas it is said (a) "that the priests, and Levites, and elders of the fathers," who had seen the first temple, wept when the foundation of the second was laid, though it is manifest that the latter temple was (b) 40 cubits larger than the former †; it must be remembered, that the reason of their weeping was not so much because it was like to prove far inferior to that of Solomon as to its outward structure, but because it was to want those extraordinary marks of the Divine favour wherewith the other temple was honoured. The second temple was built upon the same foundations with the first; and therefore the different measures that we find of them in the books of Kings and Ezra, are to be understood in respect of the different distances between which the said measures were taken. The twenty cubits breadth, which is said of Solomon's temple, was from the inside of the wall on the one side to the inside of the wall on the other; but the sixty cubits breadth of that to be built by Zerubbabel was the breadth of the whole building, from the inside of the outer wall of it on the one side to the inside of the outer wall on the other. So that the difference of the said twenty cubits breadth, and of the said sixty cubits breadth, is no more than this,—That the one is meant of the temple strictly so called; the other of the temple and its appertaining buildings. Both the temples then, without all doubt, were of the same dimensions; but then here was the difference, the sad difference, which drew tears from the eyes of the elders, viz. that, in all appearance, there were little or no hopes that the poor beginnings of the latter temple would ever be raised to the grandeur and magnificence of the former, since the one had been built by the wisest and richest king, and constantly adorned by some one or other of his posterity; the other now begun by a small company of exiles just returned from their captivity; the one in a time of profound peace and the greatest opulence, the other in a time of uncommon calamity and distress; the one finished with the most costly stones and timber, wrought with exquisite art, and overlaid with vast quantities of gold, the other to be raised out of no better materials than what could be dug from the ruinous foundation of the old one. But the occasion of their grief was not only this, that the materials and ornaments of the second temple (c) were even as nothing in comparison of the first; but that the ark of the covenant †; and the mercy-seat †² which was upon it, the holy fire upon the

From Jer. xl.
7. to xlv. all
Daniel, and
from Ezra, i.
to v.

permanent; and I am persuaded that the Jews would think sacrifices offered on the *site* of the old temple efficacious at present.]

(a) Ezra iii. 12. (b) Compare Ezra vi. 3. with 1 Kings vi. 20. and 2 Chron. iii. 3.

‡ [This is probably a mistake. The words in *Ezra* are;—Let "the height thereof be threescore cubits, and the *breadth* thereof threescore cubits." But the word rendered *breadth* signifies likewise *length*, and probably should be so translated here. See *Patriarch* on the text.]

(c) Hagg. ii. 3.

† This was a small chest or coffer, three feet nine inches in length, two feet three inches in breadth, and two feet three inches in height, Exod. xxv. 10, 22. In it were put the two tables of the law, the broken ones as well as the whole ones (say the Rabbins), and nothing else was put therein when it was brought into Solomon's temple, 1 Kings viii. 9. but in process of time Aaron's rod, the pot of manna, and the original volume of the law, written by Moses's own hand, came to be likewise put in it, Heb. ix. 4. The Jews have a tradition, which Epiphanius (in *Vita Jerem. Prophetæ*) takes notice of, that Jeremiah, foreseeing the approaching ruin of the temple,

carried the ark of the covenant into a cave, and by his prayers prevailed that it might be sunk and swallowed up in the rock, so that it might never more be seen; and this, though a fiction, is designed to inform us, that in the destruction of Jerusalem this sacred piece of furniture was lost. The Jews indeed, upon the building of the second temple, made an ark of the same shape and dimensions with the first, and put it in the same place; but it had none of its honours and prerogatives; no tables of the law, no Aaron's rod, no pot of manna in it, no appearance of the Divine glory over it, no oracles given from it; the only use that was made of it was to be a representative of the former on the great day of expiation, and to be a repository of the Holy Scriptures, i. e. of the original copy of that collection which was made of them, after the captivity, by Ezra and the men of the great synagogue. *Prideaux's Connection*, anno 535.

†² This was the cover of the ark of the covenant. It was made of solid gold, and at the two ends of it were fixed two cherubims of the same metal, which, by their wings extended forwards, seemed to form a throne for the majesty of God, who in Scripture is represented to us as sitting between the cherubims;

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altar †, the Urim and Thummim †², the spirit of prophecy †³, the Shechinah †⁴, or Divine Presence, the five great things for which the former temple was so renowned were lost and gone, and never to be recovered to this other.

This was a just matter of lamentation to those that had seen these singular tokens of the Divine favour in the former temple, and a discouragement of their proceeding with the building of the present; and therefore the prophet Haggai was sent to inform them, that all these wants and defects should be abundantly repaired by the coming of the Messiah, the true Shechinah of the Divine Majesty, in the time of the second temple: (a) "I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come, and I will fill this house with glory; the glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of Hosts."

and the ark itself was as it were his footstool. The Hebrew word *caphoreth*, by being translated *propitiatory*, seems to imply, that from thence the Lord heard the vows and prayers of his people, and pardoned them their sins; and by its being at other times translated *oracle*, seems farther to imply, that from thence he manifested his will and pleasure, and gave responses to Moses. *Calmet's Dictionary* under the word.

† This fire came down from heaven, first upon the altar in the tabernacle, at the consecration of Aaron and his sons to the priesthood, Levit. ix. 24. and afterwards it descended anew upon the altar in the temple of Solomon at its consecration, 2 Chron. vii. 1. and there it was constantly fed and maintained by the priests, day and night, in the same manner as it had been in the tabernacle. The Jews have a tradition that Jeremiah, foreseeing the destruction of the temple, took this fire, and hid it in a pit; but that, at the rebuilding of the temple, being brought again from thence, it revived upon the altar: but this is all a fiction; for the generality of them allow, that, at the destruction of the temple, it was extinguished; and, in the time of the second temple, nothing was made use of for all their burnt-offerings but common fire only. *Prideaux's Connection*.

†² Whether the Urim and Thummim lay in the high priest's breast-plate itself, or only in the clearness and perfection of those oracular answers which he received from God, when he went to consult him upon any important matter, so it was, that having put on all his pontifical robes, and presented himself in the sanctuary before the Holy of Holies, he knew, by one means or other, most probably by an audible voice from the mercy-seat, (which was within behind the veil) what the Divine pleasure was concerning the affair wherein he came to consult him. This was a singular privilege vouchsafed to the Jews; but it does not appear from the Sacred History, that there are

any footsteps of consulting the Lord in this manner after the building of Solomon's temple to the time of its destruction; and, after its destruction, all are agreed, that this was never restored: so that there seems to be some reason for that maxim among the Jews, viz. that the Holy Spirit spake to the children of Israel, during the tabernacle, by Urim and Thummim; under the first temple by the prophets; and under the second by Bath-col, or a voice sent from heaven, such as was heard at the baptism of Jesus Christ, and at his transfiguration. *Patrick's Commentary*, and *Calmet's Dictionary*.

†³ This, it must be owned, was not wholly withdrawn from the Jewish church in the time of the second temple. The prophets Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, lived in this time and prophesied; but after their death, (which the rabbins say happened in one year) the prophetic spirit wholly ceased from among the Jews; [till it appeared again in Zechariah, the father of the Baptist, in Anna the prophetess, and in Simeon about the time of the birth of our Lord. See St Luke i. and ii.] *Prideaux's Connection*.

†⁴ The Shechinah was a sensible token of God's presence among the Jews, which consisted of a visible cloud, resting over the mercy-seat, or cover of the ark of the covenant, just above the two cherubims that overshadowed it, Lev. xvi. 2. It there first appeared when Moses consecrated the tabernacle, and afterwards, at the consecration of the temple by Solomon, was translated thither; (vid. vol. i. p. 537.) and there continued, in the same visible manner, while the ark was in its proper place, either in the tabernacle or temple (but not while it was in movement, as it often was during the time of the tabernacle), till the Babylonians destroyed the temple, after which it never appeared more. *Prideaux's Connection*.

(a) Hagg. ii. 7. 9.

DISSERTATION I.

OF THE PRIDE AND PUNISHMENT OF NEBUCHADNEZZAR.

WHOEVER looks back upon the actions of Nebuchadnezzar, will easily perceive that he was a great and successful warrior; that, during (a) his father's lifetime, and while he commanded the army as general under him, he drove the Egyptians (the only nation that pretended at this time to rival the Babylonish monarchy) out of Syria and Palestine, took Jerusalem, and carried away the people captive; and that, upon his own accession to the throne, he overcame the Phœnicians and Tyrians, over-ran all Egypt, and made it tributary, and returned home in triumph loaded with rich spoils. The Scripture however does not impute the occasion of his pride to the number of his conquests or the extent of his dominions, but to the state and magnificence of his royal city, in which (as it were at one view) he saw all the fruits of his martial toil, all the spoils of his many victories, and all the revenues of his vast empire, comprised and displayed in their utmost splendour. For while he was walking upon his palace at Babylon, very probably in his hanging-gardens, and in the uppermost terrace of them, from whence he might have a full prospect of the whole city, (b) "Is not this great Babylon (said he to himself) which I have built for the house of the kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?"

From Jer. xi.
7. to xlv. all
Daniel, and
from Ezra i.
to v.

Babylon was one of the most ancient cities of the world. It was founded by Nimrod, not long after the building of the famous tower of Babel, and was enlarged and beautified by Semiramis; but Nebuchadnezzar was the person who put the finishing hand to it, to make it one of the great wonders of the world: and therefore it may not be amiss to take a short survey of the works that are generally ascribed to him, in order to see what grounds he might have for this arrogant vaunt.

1. The whole city, which stood on a large flat, consisted properly of two parts, which were divided by the river Euphrates. That part of it which was on the east side of the river was the old city; the other, on the west side, was added by Nebuchadnezzar, and the whole was a square of an hundred and twenty furlongs, or fifteen miles every way, which made the whole circumference of it to be four hundred and eighty furlongs, or exactly threescore miles. Its walls, which were in thickness eighty-seven feet †, in height three hundred and fifty feet, and in compass four hundred and eighty furlongs, were all built of large bricks, cemented together with bitumen, a glutinous slime, which, issuing out of the earth in that country, binds stronger and firmer than lime, and in a short time grows harder than the very brick and stone which it cements.

The city was encompassed without the walls with a vast ditch filled with water, and lined with bricks on both sides, after the manner of a counterscarp; and as the earth

(a) Vide *Prideaux's Connection*, vol. i. p. 62, 65, 66, and 92.

(b) Dan. iv. 30.

† Some authors indeed will have them to have been no more than 50 cubits; but then they speak of them only as they were after the time of Darius Hystaspes: For the Babylonians having revolted from him, and, in confidence of their strong walls, stood

out against him in a long siege, after he had taken the place (in order to prevent their rebellion for the future), he took away their gates, and beat down their walls to the height above mentioned, and beyond this they were never after raised. *Prideaux's Connection*, anno 570.

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which was dug out of it made the bricks wherewith the walls were built, we may judge of the depth and largeness of the ditch from the vast height and thickness of the walls. In the whole compass of the wall there were an hundred gates, i. e. five and twenty on each of the four sides, all made of solid brass; and between every two of these gates, at proper distances, were three towers, i. e. at the four corners of this great square, there were four towers † between each of these corners, and the next gate on either side three towers; and every one of these towers was ten feet higher than the walls.

Answering to every one of these gates, there was a street which led from gate to gate; so that there were fifty in all, each fifteen miles long; whereof twenty-five going one way, and twenty-five another, they crossed each other at right angles, and so cut the whole city out into six hundred and seventy-six squares, each of which was four furlongs and an half on every side, i. e. two miles and a quarter in compass; and round these, on every side towards the streets, stood the houses, all built three or four stories high, with fronts adorned with all manner of embellishments, and with yards and gardens thrown backwards. Besides these, there were four other streets, built only on one side, because they had the wall on the other, which went round the four sides of the city, and were all of them two hundred feet broad, though the other streets were but an hundred and fifty.

Quite cross the city ran a branch of the river Euphrates, which entered in on the north, and went out on the south side; and over it, in the very middle of the city, was a bridge of a furlong in length, and thirty feet in breadth, built with wonderful art, to supply the defect of a foundation in the bottom of the river, which was all sandy. By this bridge a communication was kept up between the two parts of the city; and at the two extremities of it stood two palaces, the old one on the east, and new one on the west side of the river. The former of these took up four of the squares above mentioned, the other nine; and the temple of Belus, which stood near the old palace, took up another.

2. The temple of Belus, which was one of the most wonderful works in the world, was a square of a furlong on each side, i. e. half a mile in the whole compass; and consisted of eight towers (or what seemed like towers) built one above another. Herodotus tells us, that the way to go up it was by stairs, on the outside round it; from whence it seems most likely, that the whole ascent to it was by the benching-in, drawn in a sloping line, from the bottom to the top eight times round it, and that this made the appearance of eight towers one above another. The eight towers (as they are called) being like so many stories, were each of them †² seventy five feet high, and in them were many great rooms with arched roofs, supported with pillars, which, after that the place was consecrated to an idolatrous use, were all made parts of the temple: but the most sacred part of all, and where the chiefest devotions were performed, was the up-

† This is to be understood only of those parts of the walls where there was need of towers; for some parts of them, lying against morasses always full of water, where they could not be approached by any enemy, had no need of any towers at all for their defence, and therefore in them there were none built: For, whereas the whole number of them amounted to no more than two hundred and fifty, had the same uniform order been observed in their disposition all round, there must have been many more. *Prideaux's Connection*, anno 570.

†² Some, following the mistake of the Latin version of Herodotus, wherein the lowest of these towers is said to be a furlong thick and a furlong high, will have each of these towers to be a furlong high, which, amounting to a mile in the whole, is enough to shock

any one's belief. But the Greek of Herodotus, which is the authentic text of that historian, says no such thing, but only that it was a furlong long and a furlong broad, without mentioning any thing of its height at all. And therefore Strabo, in his description of it, calling it a pyramid, because of its decreasing and benching-in at every tower, says of the whole, that it was a furlong high and a furlong on every side, which, without any farther addition, makes it exceed the greatest of the pyramids of Egypt, I mean for its height. For whereas the height of the tallest pyramid was no more than 481 feet, that of the temple of Belus was 600, i. e. higher by 119 feet, which is one quarter of the whole. *Prideaux's Connection*, anno 570.

permost story, over which, on the top of the tower, was an observatory, by the benefit of which the Babylonians advanced their knowledge in astronomy beyond * all other nations.

From Jer. xl:
7. to xlv. all
Daniel, and
from Ezra i.
to v.

This tower, and the several rooms in it, were all that was called the temple of Belus, until Nebuchadnezzar enlarged it with vast buildings, which were erected in a square of two furlongs on every side, or a mile in circumference. On the outside of these was a wall enclosing the whole, in which were several gates leading to the temple, all made of solid brass, very probably from the brazen sea, the brazen pillars, and the other brazen vessels, which (a) from the temple of Jerusalem were carried to Babylon.

This temple stood till the time of Xerxes: but he, on his return from the Grecian expedition, having first plundered it of its immense riches, among which were several images or statues of massy gold, demolished the whole of it, and laid it all in ruins. Alexander, upon his return to Babylon from his Indian expedition, proposed to have rebuilt it, and to that purpose set ten thousand men on work to clear away the rubbish: but his death, in a short time after, put an end to all further proceedings in that design, and (as modern travellers assure us) the knowledge of the very place where it once stood is at this time lost.

3. Near to this temple, on the east side of the river, as we said, stood the old palace of the kings of Babylon, four miles in circumference; and exactly over-against it, on the other side of the river, was the new palace built by Nebuchadnezzar, eight miles in compass, and surrounded with three walls one within another. But the most wonderful things belonging to it were the hanging gardens which Nebuchadnezzar made in complaisance to his wife Amylis*², daughter of Astyages, king of Media: For she, retaining a strong inclination for the mountains and forests of her own country, desired to have something like it in Babylon, and therefore, to gratify her, he erected this monstrous work of vanity.

These gardens contained a space of four hundred feet square, and were carried up aloft into the air, in the manner of several terraces, one above another, until the highest of them came up to the height of the walls of the city, that is to say, was three hundred and fifty feet high. The ascent was from terrace to terrace, by stairs ten feet wide, and the whole pile was sustained by vast arches built upon arches, one above another, and strengthened by a wall, surrounding it on every side, of two and twenty feet in thickness.

On the top of the arches were first laid large flat stones sixteen feet long and four broad; over them was a layer of reed, mixed with a great quantity of bitumen; over this were two rows of brick closely cemented together by plaster; over these were laid thick sheets of lead, and all this to keep the moisture of the mould from draining away; and then, lastly, upon this lead was laid such a large quantity of earth heaped together, as afforded depth enough for the largest trees to take root in it. For in this garden there was every thing that could either delight the eye or gratify the curiosity, beautiful and large trees, flowers, plants, and shrubs; and to keep every thing verdant and gay in the

* The Babylonians made great boasts of the antiquity of their knowledge in this kind of learning. They reckoned four hundred seventy three thousand years, from the observations of their first astrologers to the arrival of Alexander the Great; but Aristotle, who was curious in enquiring into the truth of what was related of these observations, desired of Calisthenes, his scholar, who accompanied Alexander to Babylon, to send him the most certain and exact account that he could gather of this matter; and accordingly he sent him astronomical observations that had been made for one thousand nine hundred and three

years, which came within an hundred and fifteen years of the flood, or fifteen after the tower of Babel was built, but fell infinitely short of their other monstrous computation, though this of Calisthenes seems to be a little enlarged; because, according to our chronology, we reckon no more than eighteen hundred years from Nimrod and the tower of Babel to the reign of Alexander at Babylon. *Calmet's Dictionary*, under the word *Babylon*.

(a) Dan. i. 2. 2 Chron. xxxvi. 7.

*² [Whom Herodotus calls *Nitocris*.]

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or 586.

upper terrace, there was an aqueduct or engine which drew up water out of the river into a kind of a reservoir above, and from thence watered the whole garden.

4. The river indeed, at a certain season of the year, viz. in the months of June, July, and August, by the sun's melting the snow in the mountains of Armenia, used to overflow its banks (in the same manner as the Nile in Egypt does), to the great damage of the city and country of Babylon; and therefore, to prevent this inconvenience for the future, Nebuchadnezzar had two artificial canals cut on the east side of the Euphrates, in order to carry off the superfluous water into the Tigris. One of these canals discharged itself near Selucia, and the other over-against Apamia: and, for the farther security of the country, from the head of these canals down to the city, and some way lower, he made vast banks of brick and bitumen; but the most wonderful part of the work was within the city.

There, on each side of the Euphrates, he built, from the very bottom of the channel, a great wall of the same thickness with the walls of the city, i. e. eighty-seven feet thick, and of an hundred and sixty furlongs (which are † twenty miles of our measure) in length; and over against every street that crossed the river, he made on each side a brazen gate in the wall, and stairs leading down to the river, from whence the inhabitants used to pass by boat from one part of the city to the other.

5. It was necessary, however, that while this work was carrying on the stream should be diverted some other way; and therefore, to this purpose, he had a vast artificial lake made to the west of Babylon, which, according to the lowest computation, was forty miles square, and an hundred and sixty in compass; and being of a proportionable depth, was able to contain all the water until the work was finished. When this was done, the river was returned to its former channel; but the lake, and the canal which led to it, was still preserved, because they were found of use, not only to prevent the danger of all overflowings of the river, but to keep water likewise all the year round, as in a common reservoir, which might be let out upon proper occasions by sluices, for the improvement and fertilizing of the ground.

These are some of the vast works †² which the generality of historians ascribe to Nebuchadnezzar, and, upon the view and contemplation of which, he grew so arrogant and elated, as to think himself equal, if not superior to God: For "Is not this great Babylon, which I have built for the honour of my majesty?" says he of himself; (a) and, who is God but Nebuchadnezzar? says his sycophants concerning him. The truth is, if we will credit the account in the book of Judith relating to this prince, he was, in his temper, a professed atheist: The sense of his success in life, and of the wonderful works which he had achieved, both in a civil and military capacity, had so intoxicated his reason, as to make him become fool enough to say in his heart, there was no other God but himself; for this is the avowed purpose of his sending his armies under the general Holofernes, (b) "That all nations should worship him only, and that all tongues and tribes should call upon him as God *."

† And therefore this work must have begun two miles and an half above the city, and continued two miles and an half below it, because the city throughout was no more than fifteen miles. *Prideaux's Connection*, Anno 570.

†² Berosus, Megasthenes, and Abydenus, attribute all these works to Nebuchadnezzar; but Herodotus tells us, that the bridge, the river banks, and the lake, were the work of Nitocris his daughter-in-law, who might possibly finish what he at his death left incomplete, and upon that account receive from this historian the honour of the whole.

(a) Judith vi. 2.

(b) Ibid. iii. 8.

* [There is nothing in the canonical books of the Old Testament, where *Nebuchadnezzar* is mentioned, from which it can reasonably be inferred that he was an atheist; and the *Nabuchodonosor* of the Apocryphal book of *Judith* appears to have been a very different man. In that book *Nabuchodonosor* is expressly said to have reigned in *Nineveh*, and to have been the king of the *Assyrians*; but it nowhere appears that *Nebuchadnezzar* ever held his court in *Nineveh*. By Dr Hales, *Nabuchodonosor* is supposed, on good ground, to have been the immediate successor of *Ninus III.* the immediate predecessor of *Sarea*, or *Sardanapalus II.* and therefore the last king of *Nineveh*

Fit therefore it was that such impious pride should be abased, and that he who set himself above the rank of men, upon a level with God, nay, in an elevation superior to God, should be made sensible of his dependant state, and taught humility and self-annihilation, by being degraded to the condition of a brute. He "had said in his heart, (for of him * is that prophecy in Isaiah), (a) I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God;—I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High—but how art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning? how art thou cut down to the ground, who didst weaken the nations?—They that see thee, shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake all kingdoms, that made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof? And well they might when they saw (b) him dwelling with the beasts of the field, eating grass like oxen, and wet with the dew of heaven, with his hair grown like eagle's feathers, and his nails like the claws of birds." But then the question is, what the proper sense of these words is? or, (what is the same thing) of what kind this Divine infliction upon the king of Babylon was?

From Jer. xl.
7. to xiv. all
Daniel, and
from Ezra i.
to v.

Origen (c), who was for resolving every thing that he could not comprehend in Scripture into allegory, was of opinion, that, under the name of Nebuchadnezzar, Daniel intended to give us a representation of the fall of Lucifer, being probably led to think so by the above-cited passage in the prophet Isaiah. But the account of the punishment which befel this prince, is so often inculcated in the same chapter, foretold in the dream explained by the prophet, repeated by the voice from heaven, and all this published in a solemn declaration by the king himself after the recovery of his senses,—that there is no manner of grounds to think of any figure or allegory in this piece of history.

Nebuchadnezzar's real metamorphosis into an ox, both as to his outward and inward form, is a notion too gross for any but the vulgar, who may be taken perhaps with such fictions of the poets; and what we have no need to recur to (thereby to multiply miracles to no purpose) from any words in the text, which will fairly admit of another interpretation.

The metempsychosis of an ox's soul into Nebuchadnezzar's body, thereby to communicate the same motions, taste, and inclinations that are observable in that animal, is a notion unknown to all antiquity; for, according to the doctrine of Pythagoras, such a transmigration was never made until the body was actually dead; besides the manifest incongruity of supposing two souls, a rational and a brutal, animating the same prince, or the prince's soul departed from him, and become the substitute to a brute.

but one of the *Assyrian* dynasty. Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon appears to have been an arrogant and vain-glorious conqueror, but in no other sense an *atheist* than many such conquerors have been, even in Christian countries, who, elated by success, forgot in their practice the God of battles, by whom that success was obtained. Far from being a *speculative atheist*, or from demanding Divine worship to himself, the Babylonian conqueror appears to have been a zealous *polytheist* and idolater; acknowledging, however, as most polytheists of any reflection did, that there was one God superior to all the others, and ready occasionally—perhaps always—to attribute this superiority to the God of Israel. It is probable likewise that he believed in the *Metempsychosis*, a doctrine, which appears from the *Asiatic Researches* and other ancient records to have prevailed over all the East from a period long anterior to the reign of *Nebuchadnezzar*; and if such was the case, there was a peculiar propriety in punishing his pride by the disease called *Lycanthropy*. He persisted, in opposition to his own

repeated conviction, to worship the gods, in whom he appears at times to have had no confidence whatever, giving, it may be supposed, some degree of credit to this gloomy doctrine; and therefore, with wisdom truly Divine, he was visited with a species of madness, which, though it has been occasionally witnessed in every age and in different countries, appears to have been most frequent where the doctrine of the *metempsychosis* or the *transmigration of souls* prevailed.] See *Warburton's* Div. Leg. on this subject, and likewise *Mosheim's* edition of *Cudworth's* Intellectual System, with the authors referred to by the learned editor of that profound work.

* [This appears to me to be a mistake. The prophecy seems to refer not to Nebuchadnezzar alone, but to him and the succeeding kings of Babylon in general; or if any individual be particularly pointed out, Belshazzar seems to be that individual.]

(a) Isai. xiv. 13, &c.

(b) Dan. iv. 32, 33.

(c) *Cabmet's* Dissert. sur la Metamorphose, &c.

A. M. 3417,
&c. or 4825.
Ant. Chris.
587, &c.
or 586.

A fascination, both in the eyes of Nebuchadnezzar's subjects, and in his own fancy and imagination, which might make them both believe that he was really changed into an ox, and had the figure of one, is a notion every whit as liable to exception. For besides that it is difficult to conceive, how a deception of this kind could abide upon a whole nation for the space of seven years, the Scripture takes notice of no evil spirit in this whole transaction, but imputes all to the sole power of God, who can humble the proud, and chastise the wicked as he pleases.

The most general therefore, and most probable opinion is,—that Nebuchadnezzar, by the judgment of God, was punished with madness, which so disordered his imagination, that he fancied himself a beast, and was prompted to act like one.

There is a distemper (not a very common one indeed, but what is befallen several) which naturalists and physicians call lycanthropy *, when, by the power of a depraved imagination, and a distempered brain, a man really thinks that he is a wolf, an ox, a dog, or the like; and accordingly, in his inclinations, motions, and behaviour, cannot forbear imitating the particular creature which he fancies himself to be. In this manner Nebuchadnezzar, imagining that he was become an ox, walked upon all four, fed upon grass, went naked, lowed with his voice, and batted (as he thought) with his horns; and, in short, did all the actions, as far as he was able, that a real ox is known to do. (a) Hereupon his subjects, perceiving this change in him, took him and bound him (as madmen are wont to be treated); but at last, he escaping out of their hands, fled to the fields, where he herded with the cattle, exposed to the dew of heaven, and the other inclemencies of the weather; where his neglected body became horrid and dreadful to behold; where his hair and his nails, in process of time, grew in the hideous manner that the prophet had described them *; and where his heart, i. e. his apprehension, appetite, and inclinations, by the continuance of his distemper, became quite brutal, and of the same cast with the beasts that graze.

The masters of the medics, who have treated of this kind of madness, have made it their observation, that the persons infected with it are generally so excessively strong, that no bands or chains can hold them. They can live a long while without eating or drinking, and endure wet and cold without any great inconvenience to themselves; and therefore Nebuchadnezzar, though bred up in the pleasures and delicacies of the court, might, by the strength of his distemper, be enabled to do what otherwise he would not; to live in the fields for seven years together, naked and exposed to the injuries of the weather, without any thing to nourish him, except either the grass on the ground, or the wild fruits on the hedges: But then, whether he retained the use of his reason whilst he continued in this disastrous state, is a question that is not so easily determined.

The Scripture indeed, at first sight, seems to intimate, that he had no sense of his misery, nor made any reflection upon himself, or upon what he was doing, until God was pleased to remove his afflicting hand: For these are his own words, (b) “At the end of my days, I Nebuchadnezzar lift up mine eyes unto heaven, and my understanding returned unto me.” Which seem to imply, that all along before this, his reason was

* Such was the distemper of Lycaon, king of Arcadia, which Ovid has described, as if he had been turned into a wolf.

*Territus ipse fugit, nactusque silentia ruris
Exululat, frustra loqui conatur: ab ipso
Colligit os rabiem, solitæque cupidine cædis
Vertitur in pecudes; et nunc quoque sanguine
gaudet.*

*In villos abeunt vestes, in crura lacerti,
Fit lupus, et veteris servat vestigia formæ.*

Ovid. Metam. lib. i.

(a) Dan. iv. 33.

*2[It seems not necessary to suppose that the prophecy was fulfilled or meant to be fulfilled in this literal sense. It is enough that he fancied himself to be among wild beasts, and his hair and nails to have grown in this hideous manner. Such fancies constitute the chief part of the disease. But had he literally betaken himself to the society of wild beasts, he would have been torn in pieces long before the expiration of seven years.]

(b) Dan. iv. 34.

in a kind of *délirium*, and without any consciousness of what he was about. But then it may be asked, Wherein would his punishment and humiliation consist, if the man was insensible? if he knew nothing of the matter? nay, if he took pleasure (as most mad-men do) in the disorder of imagination?

From Jer. xl. 7. to xlv. all Daniel, and from Ezra i. to v.

To be miserable, and not to know it, by some may be thought the very height of misery; but the person in Horace who frequented the empty theatre every day, and delighted himself with the reveries of his own fancy, with plays and shows which no body saw but himself, was not so well pleased with his friends when they had recovered him to his senses.

———Pol me occidistis, Amici,
Non servastis, ait, cui sic extorta voluptas,
Et demptus per vim mentis gratissimus error. *Hor. Ep. lib. ii.*

To answer the ends of Providence, therefore, in afflicting in this manner this haughty and assuming prince, which was to mortify his pride, and bring him to a state of humiliation and acknowledgment of God's superior hand, we may suppose that, at certain intervals at least, he had a sense and perception of his misery; that he saw the condition to which he was degraded; but being carried away with his brutal appetite, found it not in his power to extricate himself. St Paul, in his description of a man given up to his lusts, (whereof Nebuchadnezzar in his present condition is no improper emblem) has these remarkable words: (a) "I know that in me (i. e. in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing; for to will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good, I find not; for the good that I would, I do not; but the evil that I would not, that I do. For though I delight in the law of God after the inner man, yet I see another law in my members, warring against the law in my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin, that is in my members. O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" And in like manner, if we suppose this king of Babylon in such a perpetual struggle and conflict with himself; seeing his error, but not able to avoid it; sensible of his disgrace, but not capable to redress it; committing the things which his soul abhorred, and detesting himself for what he found himself necessitated to do, till God should think fit to restore his understanding, by allaying the ferment of his blood and humours, correcting his appetite, and ranging his ideas into their proper order:—If we suppose this, I say, we have before us the image of a creature completely miserable; reasons for his humiliation during his affliction, innumerable*; a fountain to supply his gratitude upon the removal of it, inexhaustible; and, from his example, this lecture of admonition to all succeeding generations: (b) "Thus saith the Lord, let not the wise man glory in his wisdom; neither let the mighty man glory in his might. Let not the rich man glory in his riches; but let him that glorieth, glory in this,—that he understandeth, and knoweth me, that I am the Lord, who exerciseth loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth; for in these things I delight, saith the Lord."

(a) Rom. vii. 18, &c.

* What Nebuchadnezzar says of himself, with regard to this duty, is very remarkable,—"I blessed the Most High, and praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation. All the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing, for he doth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What dost thou? I therefore now praise and extol, and ho-

nour the king of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment, and those that walk in pride he is able to abase," Dan. iv. 34, &c. which is enough, one would imagine, to make us think charitably of the conversion, and final end of this prince, and, with St Austin, to conclude, that whatever happened to him by way of punishment, was designed by Providence for his soul's health. Hoc enim erat in occulto judicio, et misericordia Dei, ut huic regi eo modo consuleret ad salutem. Epist. iii.

(b) Jer. ix. 23, &c.

CHAPTER II.

FROM THE DEATH OF CYRUS TO THAT OF NEHEMIAH.

THE HISTORY.

A. M. 3417,
&c. or 4882.
Ant. Chris.
587, &c.
or 529.

CYRUS died when he was seventy years old, after he had reigned, from his first being made commander of the Persian and Median armies, thirty years; from his taking of Babylon, nine years; and from his becoming sole monarch of the East, seven years; and was succeeded by his son Cambyses, whom the Scripture calls Ahasuerus *.

From E
7. to the
all Esth
and par
Hagg. 2
and Ma

As soon as he was well settled in the throne, the Samaritans (instead of applying themselves secretly to the ministers and officers of his court) presented their petition (a) to him openly, desiring that the rebuilding of Jerusalem might be stopped; and though they did not prevail with him to revoke his father's decree, yet, by the several discouragements which he put upon it, he in a great measure defeated its main design, so that the work went on very heavily in his reign. But his reign was not long; it was but seven years and five months before he came to an untimely end, and was succeeded for a short time by the Magian, *² who *³ pretended to be his brother Smerdis, and

* [This seems to be a mistake. The Ahasuerus of Esther was probably Artaxerxes Longimanus.]

(a) Ezra iv. 6.

*² The word *Magian*, or *Mige-gush*, in the old Persian language, signifies a person that had his ears cut off, and was a name of contempt given to the whole sect, upon account of a certain impostor among them, who had the misfortune to lose his ears, and yet had the confidence to usurp the crown of Cyrus; but, before this incident, they went under another name, and were held in great reputation among the Persians. They were indeed their chief professors of philosophy, and, in matters of religion, made these the great articles of their faith:—"That there were two principles or gods, the one the cause of all the good, and the other the cause of all the evil in the world; but in this they were divided; that some of them held both these principles to have been from all eternity, whereas others maintained, that the good principle only was eternal, and the evil one created, in the like manner as we believe that the devil is a creature, who is fallen from his original purity and perfection. These two principles, they believed, were in continual opposition to each other, which was to continue to the end of the world; but then, the good

principle having overcome the evil, they should each of them have a distinct world to himself; the good reigning over all good beings, and the evil over all the wicked. They imagined farther, that darkness was the truest symbol of the evil, as light was of the good god; and therefore they always worshipped him before fire, as being the cause of light, and before the sun more especially, because they accounted it the most perfect light. They paid divine honours, in short, to light, to the sun, to the fire, in their temples, and to fire in their houses; but they always hated darkness, because they thought it a representation of the evil god, whom they ever had in the utmost detestation." Such were the Magi among the ancient Persians, and such are the Guebres, or worshippers of fire among the present Persians and Indians. *Prideaux's Connection*, and *Calmet's Dictionary* under the word.

*³ The manner in which this Magian came to usurp the Persian throne, is thus related by most historians:—Cambyses had a brother, the only son of Cyrus besides himself, and born of the same mother. His name, (according to Xenophon) was Tanaoxares, but Herodotus calls him Smerdis, and Justin, Mergis. He accompanied him in his wars for some time; but

whom the history of Ezra † calls Artaxerxes. To him the Samaritans in like manner addressed themselves, and, in a memorial, represented, “That †² the Jews were rebuilding their city and temple at Jerusalem, which might be a matter of pernicious consequence to his empire; that these Jews had always been a rebellious people, as he would find, if he consulted the records of his ancestors; that therefore there was reason to suspect, that in case they were permitted to go on, when once they had finished the work, they would withdraw their obedience, or refuse to pay tribute †³; and that by their example, very probably, all Syria and Palestine would be tempted to revolt; so

From Ezra iv.
7. to the end;
all Esth. Neh.
and part of
Hagg. Zech.
and Malachi.

upon a pique of jealousy, the king sent him back into Persia, and there caused him to be murdered privately. The king, when he went upon the Egyptian expedition, had left the supreme government of his affairs in the hands of Patizithes, one of the chief of the Magians, (for the king was addicted to that sect of religion) who had a brother that did very much resemble Smerdis, the son of Cyrus, and was for that reason perhaps called by the same name, Patizithes, hearing of the young prince's death, and supposing that this, and some other extravagances of Cambyses, had made him odious to his subjects, placed this brother of his on the throne, pretending that he was the true Smerdis, the son of Cyrus, and so sent heralds through the empire to proclaim him king. It was the custom of the eastern princes, in those days, to live retired in their palaces, and there transact all their affairs by the intercourse of their eunuchs, without admitting any else, unless those of the highest confidence, to have access to them. This conduct the pretended Smerdis exactly observed: but Otanes, a Persian nobleman, having a daughter (whose name was Phedyma) who had been one of Cambyses's wives, and was now kept by Smerdis in the same quality, and being desirous to know whether he was the real son of Cyrus or no, sent her instructions, that the first night she lay with him, she should feel whether he had any ears, (because Cyrus, for some crime or other, had cut off this Magian's ears) and she acquainting her father that he had none, he immediately took six others of the Persian quality with him, (among whom Darius was one) and entering the palace, slew both the usurper and his brother, who had been the contriver of the whole plot. *Prideaux's Connection*, Anno 522.

† That Cambyses was the Ahasuerus, (as we said before) and the false Smerdis the Artaxerxes who obstructed the work of the temple, is plain from hence, —That they are said in Scripture (Ezra iv. 5, &c.) to be the kings of Persia that reigned between the time of Cyrus and the time of that Darius, by whose decree the temple was finished: but as that Darius was Darius the son of Hystaspes, between whom and Cyrus there reigned none in Persia but Cambyses and Smerdis, it must follow from hence, that none but Cambyses and Smerdis could be the Ahasuerus and Artaxerxes, who are said in Ezra to have put a stop to this work. *Prideaux's Connection*, Anno 522.

[In questions of this kind there is no writer to whom greater deference is due than Dr Prideaux; but his opinion that *Cambyses* was the *Ahasuerus*, and

Smerdis Magus the *Artaxerxes* of Scripture, rests entirely on the supposition, that the reigns of *Ahasuerus* and *Artaxerxes* intervened between those of *Cyrus* and *Darius*. This however is not said by Ezra, in the passage to which he refers; and from that passage *Ahasuerus* and *Artaxerxes* appear to me to have reigned after *Darius* there called the king of Persia. The words of Ezra are—“Then the people of the land weakened the hands of the people of Judah, and troubled them in building; and hired counsellors against them, to frustrate their purpose, all the days of Cyrus king of Persia, even until the reign of Darius king of Persia.” Here it is said plainly that the interruption began before the death of Cyrus, and was continued (through the reigns of Cambyses and Smerdis, amounting only to eight years) even to the reign of Darius Hystaspes king of Persia. During his reign of thirty-six years they seem to have met with little molestation, for Darius favoured the Jews; but at his death their enemies renewed their opposition, and, as the sacred historian says, in the reign of Ahasuerus, in the beginning of his reign, wrote they unto him an accusation against the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem.” If *Ahasuerus* and *Artaxerxes* were different sovereigns, which I think far from evident, the *Ahasuerus* of Ezra must have been *Xerxes*, and his *Artaxerxes* the *Ahasuerus* of Esther, during both of whose reigns the Jews met with much trouble and opposition from their enemies.]

†² After the return from the captivity, the people in general came to be called Jews, because, though there were many Israelites among them, yet they chiefly consisted of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin; and though the edict of Cyrus gave all permission to return when they pleased, yet the sacred writers take notice only of those who returned in a body. *Patrick's Commentary* on Ezra.

†³ For this there are three expressions in the text, toll, tribute, and custom. By the first of these, Grotius understands that which every head paid to the king, which we call poll-money; by the second, the excise, (as we now speak) that was upon commodities and merchandise; and by the last, the land-tax. But Watsius (in his Miscel. part ii.) is of opinion, that the first word rather signifies that part which every man paid out of his estate, according as it was valued; the second, that which was paid for every head; and the third, that which was paid upon the highways, by every traveller that went about the country with any kind of merchandise. *Patrick's Commentary*.

A. M. 3475,
&c. or 4890.
Ant. Chris.
529, &c.
or 521.

that in a short time his majesty would be excluded from having any benefit from his territories on that side of the river Euphrates."

Upon consulting the records which the Samaritans referred the king to, it plainly appeared, that the Jews had defended themselves with great valour, and had been subdued by Nebuchadnezzar, not without much difficulty; whereupon he issued out an edict, wherein he prohibited the Jews to proceed any farther in their building, and ordered his officers in Samaria to put it in execution. They immediately went up to Jerusalem with an armed force, and, having pursued the king's orders with the utmost rigour, put a full stop to any further proceeding in the work, until the second year of † Darius Hystaspes.

Darius, upon the death of the pretended Smerdis, was, * by a stratagem, chosen king of Persia; and though the edict which prohibited the building of the temple expired

† There are some who take the Darius here mentioned not to be Darius the II. who was the son of Hystaspes, but the Darius who is commonly called Nothus; but then they are pressed with this difficulty, which may well be called insurmountable. For, from the first year of Cyrus, who gave orders for the building of the temple, to the sixth year of Darius Nothus, in which they suppose that it was finished, there were, at least, an hundred and thirteen years; according to some, an hundred and seventeen; and, according to others, an hundred and forty-two. But now, if, all this time, Zerubbabel was in the government of Judea, and Joshua in the high priesthood, so long an authority in church or state was never heard of in any age before. Nor must it be forgotten what the prophet Haggai (chap. ii. 3.) supposes, viz. That some, then alive, remembered the glory of the first temple, and compared it with the glory of the second; which, upon the supposition that this was in the sixth year of Darius Nothus, will make them at least an hundred and fourscore years old, a thing almost incredible. And therefore the most probable opinion is, that the Darius here meant was Darius Hystaspes, whose second year was the eighteenth after the first of Cyrus, as Huetius reckons. *Patrick's Commentary*.

[This seems indeed to be conclusive for the opinion that *Darius Hystaspes* and not *Darius Nothus* was the sovereign under whose reign the temple was finished; but it is no proof whatever that the *Ahasuerus* and *Artaxerxes* of Ezra intervened between *Cyrus* and *Darius*. It was the temple of which the building was interrupted in the end of *Cyrus's* reign, and renewed in that of *Darius*; and they were the walls of Jerusalem, of which the reparation appears to have been interrupted by *Ahasuerus*, and for some time by *Artaxerxes*. Besides, it is evident that these reverses of fortune are not recorded in chronological order by the author of the book of Ezra; for after saying that "the work of the house of God ceased till the second year of Darius king of Persia," with which the fourth chapter concludes, he proceeds, in the fifth, to tell us a second time, that "*Zerubbabel* and *Joshua* began to build the house of God," which they certainly did before the death of *Cyrus*.]

* The seven princes, who had slain the usurper

Smerdis and his brother, consulting together about the settling of government, came at length to this resolution, that the monarchy should continue in the same manner that it had been established by *Cyrus*; and that, to determine which of them should ascend the throne, they should all meet at a certain place the next morning, against the rising of the sun, and that he whose horse first neighed should be appointed king. For as the sun was the great deity of all the Persians, they seemed by this method to refer their election to it; but *Darius's* groom being informed of this, tied a mare, on the night before the election, to the place where, the next morning, they were to meet, and brought his master's horse to cover her. As soon therefore as the princes met together at the time appointed, *Darius's* horse remembered the place, ran immediately thither, neighing and prancing all along; whereupon the rest dismounting, saluted him as their king, and accordingly placed him on the throne. *Prideaux's Connection*, Anno 521.

[“ This tale is highly improbable. For what man of sense, (in which *Darius* certainly was not deficient) would wish to attribute his success to a fraud?— which could only provoke his competitors, and lessen his character in the eyes of the nations. *Æschylus*, the predecessor of *Herodotus*, gave a different, and much more likely, account. He stated, that the conspirators governed in rotation; first, *Maraphis*, who is not found in the list of *Herodotus*; and next, *Artaphrenes*, whom *Herodotus* calls *Intephernes*; then *Darius*, the third, who was possessed of superior abilities and spirit of enterprise, (in which even *Herodotus* represents him as exceeding the rest, and compelling them to a prompt execution of their plan, by the threat of informing against them, if they delayed); he was also of the *Achæmenian* or royal line (for he reckoned among his ancestors, *Arsamis*, *Arinnis*, *Teispeus*, *Cyrus*, *Cambyzes*, *Teispeus*, *Achæmenes*, *Herod. B. 7. § 11.*); and his father *Hystaspes* was governor of *Persia*, the first province of the empire; and he had served in the *Egyptian* wars under *Cambyzes*. Upon all these accounts, therefore, when the government came to his turn, he naturally, and easily contrived to retain the possession of it for himself, and to transmit it to his family.” *Hales's Analysis*, &c. vol. iii. p. 133.]

with the usurper, yet had the prophets Zechariah † and Haggai much ado to prevail with the people to re-assume the work. They were fearful of the interest which the Samaritans were presumed to have at court; and accordingly found, that no sooner had they provided themselves with stone and timber, and other materials, in order to proceed in the building, but these implacable enemies betook themselves to their old practices, and endeavoured to possess Tatnai (whom Darius had made chief governor over the provinces of Syria and Palestine) with a notion, that what the Jews were doing was without authority, and would prove prejudicial to the king.

From Ezra iv.
7. to the end;
all Esth. Neh.
and part of
Hagg. Zech.
and Malachi.

Tatnai, upon this information, came to Jerusalem, and having called the governor and elders of the Jews together, * he understood from them that they had a decree from Cyrus, which empowered and authorised them in what they did: Whereupon the governor wrote to court, acquainting the king with the true state of the case, and desiring that search might be made into the public records, whether the Jews really had

† Zechariah was the son of Barachiah, and grandson of Iddo, but the time and place of his birth are unknown. Some will have him to be born at Babylon during the captivity; but others think that he was born at Jerusalem, before the tribes of Judah and Benjamin were carried away. It is certain however that he returned from Babylon with Zerubbabel, and very probable that he began to prophecy in the second year of Darius, the son of Hystaspes. The number, excellency, and preciseness of his prophecies made him be styled “The sun among the lesser prophets,” and, as he began his predictions about two months after Haggai, with him he encouraged the Jews to go on in the rebuilding of their temple, and gave them assurance of the Divine protection. But these prophecies were inconsiderable, in comparison of those which foretel the coming of the Messias in the plainest terms; the cruel war which Antiochus Epiphanes waged with the Jews, and God’s severe judgments against this tyrant; the Jewish war with the Romans, and the siege of Babylon by Darius; the dissolution of the old covenant, and the substitution of a new one under Christ; the glorious state of the Christian church, and the conversion of the Gentiles; the persecutions which the Christians should endure, and the severe punishment of their persecutors; and other such like events, contained in the ninth and following chapters of his prophecies. Some critics however are of opinion that the style of this prophet is a little interrupted and without connection, and that the 9th, 10th, and 11th chapters, which go under his name, were originally written by Jeremiah, because in Matthew, (chap. xxvii. 9, 10.) under the name of Jeremiah, we find Zechariah xi. 12. quoted; and, as the aforesaid chapters make but one continued discourse, they conclude from thence that all three belonged to Jeremiah. But it is much more natural to suppose, that the name of Jeremiah, by some unlucky mistake, has slipped into the text of St Matthew instead of that of Zechariah. Contemporary with him was the prophet Haggai, who in all probability was born at Babylon, and returned with Zerubbabel to Jerusalem. They both, with united zeal, encouraged the people to go on with the work of the temple, which by the envy of the Samaritans,

who were their enemies, and the ill offices of some at the court of Cyrus and Cambyses, whom they influenced, was discontinued for some time: But upon the accession of Darius to the throne, Haggai in particular, by reproaching the people with their indolence and insensibility, by telling them that they were careful enough to lodge themselves very commodiously, while the house of the Lord lay buried in its own ruins, and by putting them in mind that the calamities of drought and famine wherewith God had afflicted them since their return, were owing to their neglect in repairing the temple, prevailed with them to set about the work in good earnest; so that, by virtue of these reproofs, as well as some encouragements, which God occasionally authorised him to give them, they brought the whole to a conclusion in a short time. *Calmet’s Dictionary* under the words, and *Universal History*, lib. ii. c. 1.

* The plea which Josephus makes Zerubbabel the governor, and Joshua the high priest, make upon this occasion, is to this effect—“That they were the servants of the Great God, to whose honour this temple was built, and to his service dedicated by the greatest, the happiest, and the wisest prince that ever sat on that throne; that it stood for many ages, till, by reason of the wickedness of their forefathers, the city, by God’s permission, was taken by Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Chaldea, the temple pillaged and laid in ashes, and the people carried away captives into Babylon; that when Cyrus came to be possessed of the throne of Persia and Babylon, he ordered, by his royal proclamation, the rebuilding of the temple, and the restoring of all the sacred vessels that had been taken away by Nebuchadnezzar, which accordingly were transported to Jerusalem, and laid up again in the temple; that by the command of the same king, Abassar was sent to see the work expedited, and accordingly was present at the laying of the foundation; but that ever since that time, by one artifice or other, their enemies had found means to obstruct and retard it; and that, for the truth of these allegations, they desired that Darius might be wrote to, that, by consulting public records, it might be known whether or no these facts were according to this their representation.” *Jewish Hist.* lib. xi. c. 4.

A. M. 3475,
&c. or 4890.
Ant. Chris.
529, &c.
or 521.

any such decree from Cyrus, and, upon the whole, that he would be pleased to signify his will what he would have him do in this affair.

Darius, (a) who, the better to fortify his title to the crown, had married two of the daughters of Cyrus, thought himself concerned to do every thing that might tend to the honour of that great prince, and therefore confirmed the decree which he had granted to the Jews, with a fresh one of his own, wherein he gave them an assignment upon his revenues in several provinces for whatever money they wanted, to enable them to go on with the work, and to provide them sacrifices for the service of the temple, that the priests, in their daily offices, might * put up their prayers for the prosperity of the king and the royal family : And wherein he ordered, that the man should be hanged, and his house pulled down † for timber to make him a gallows, whoever should pretend to put any let or obstruction to this his injunction.

Upon the publication of this decree, and the great care that was taken to have it fully put in execution, the work of the temple went on so very successfully, that in the sixth year of Darius (according to the Jewish account), and on the third day of the twelfth month, (which is called Adar, and answers in part to our February and March), the whole of it was finished, and its dedication celebrated by the priests and Levites, and all the congregation of Israel, with great joy and solemnity. By the next month, which was the month Nisan, the first in the Jewish year, the temple was made fit for every part of Divine service ; and therefore on the fourteenth day of that month the passover was observed in it, according to the law of God, and by all the Jews that had returned from the captivity, solemnized with great joy and gladness of heart, “ because the Lord had made them joyful, (as it is expressed in the book of Ezra), and turned the heart of the king of Assyria †² unto them, to strengthen their hands in the house of God, the God of Israel.”

By the decree of Cyrus, which was thus confirmed by that of Darius, the tribute of Samaria had been assigned for the reparation of the temple ; but now that the body of the temple was finished, (though the out-works remained still untouched), the Samari-

(a) *Prideaux's Connection.*

* Though the Jews were not allowed to desire the heathen to pray to their deities for their prosperity, because they were forbidden to acknowledge any other God but one ; yet the heathen, if they thought fit, might worship their God, nor did the Jews deny them that privilege, or refuse the offerings which they brought for that purpose, until in the time of their wars with the Romans, the faction of the zealots grew to be predominant : For then (as Josephus tells us, lib. ii. c. 7.) “ One Eleazar, the son of Ananias, the high priest, a desperate, daring young man, and a military officer then in command, pressed some of his friends among the priests to receive no offering or sacrifice but from the Jews only ; by which means it came to pass that the very offerings of Cæsar, which were used constantly to be made for the welfare of the Roman people, came to be rejected ; and this proved the very ground and foundation of the war with that nation. The high priest, however, and the men of the best quality, declared themselves extremely dissatisfied with the novelty of this prohibition, and with great importunities desired the continuance of so pious a custom, as offering up prayers for princes and governors.” But all is in vain ; though this place in Ezra, chap. vi. 10. one would think, sets the duty in a clear light. *Le Clerc's Comment. on Ezra.*

† The most obvious sense of the words in the text (chap. vi. 11.) seems to be this ; but Lud. de Dieu observes, that in the words which we there render “ being set up,” there is no proper construction, and therefore he would rather have them translated according to the Septuagint, “ And standing, let him be beat upon it,” i. e. whipped, as we say, at a post, for that was a punishment among the Persians and other nations. But if a greater punishment than this should here be intended, then he makes the first words refer to the timber, and the latter to the man in this manner, “ And from above let it fall upon him ;” i. e. the stake, being lifted up, shall be struck into his body, and come out at his fundament ; which was a cruel punishment among the Eastern people, and continues still in use to this day. *Patrick's Commentary.*

†² Darius is called the king of Assyria, as now reigning over all the kingdoms which were formerly under the power of the Assyrians ; and from hence Archbishop Usher infers, that Babylon (which in the beginning of his reign had revolted) must necessarily have been reduced by Darius before this time, otherwise he thinks he could not have here been styled king of Assyria, whereof Babylon was then the metropolis. *Patrick's Commentary, and Prideaux's Connection, anno 515.*

tans pretended that the end of this assignment was ceased, and thereupon refused to pay the tribute any longer. But the Jews, upon sending Zerubbabel their governor, with two other principal men, to Shushan, or Susa, (which was then the residence of the Persian monarchs) in order to complain of this unjust detention of the royal bounty, met with a proper redress; and returned with the king's order * to his officers of Samaria, requiring them to take an effectual care, that, pursuant to his edict, the Samaritans paid their tribute to the temple, and gave the Jews for the future no cause to complain of their refusal herein: Which put a full end to all contest about that matter, and was the last good office, we find recorded in Scripture, that Darius did the Jews. For in the six and thirtieth year of his reign *² he died, and was succeeded by Xerxes, the † eldest of his sons by Atossa, daughter to Cyrus, the great founder of the Persian monarchy.

Xerxes, (a) according to Josephus (for we have but little account of him in the Sacred records), confirmed to the Jews all the privileges that his father Darius had granted them, and particularly that which assigned them the tribute of Samaria, for the charge of the sacrifices that were to be offered in the temple of Jerusalem. It is of him that the words of the prophet Daniel are meant: (b) "Behold, there shall stand up yet three kings in Persia (which were Cyrus, Cambyses, and Darius Hystaspes), and the fourth shall be far richer than they all; and by his strength, through his riches, he shall stir up all against the realm of Grecia:" For the story is well known, with what *³ a

From Ezra iv.
7. to the end;
all Esth. Neh.
and part of
Hagg. Zech.
and Malachi.

A. M. 3475.
&c. or 4926.
Ant. Chris.
529, &c.
or 485.

* A copy of the king's order, or the letter, which he sent back by the Jewish commissioners, to the officers and lieutenants of the province, and the senate of Samaria, Josephus has recorded in these words.

"King Darius, to Tangar and Sambaba, masters of our horse at Samaria, and to Sadrack, Bobelon, and the rest of their fellow subjects there, sendeth greeting:

"Whereas I am given to understand by Zerubbabel, Ananias, and Mardocheus, on the part of the Jews, that you stand accused of interrupting, and discouraging the rebuilding of the temple, and of refusing to bear your part in the charge of the sacrifices, which by my order and command you ought to have done: This is to will and require you, upon sight of this letter, forthwith to supply them, out of my treasury at Samaria, with whatsoever they shall want for the use of their sacrifices and worship, to the end that they may offer up daily prayers and oblations, both for myself and all my people." *Jewish Antiq.* lib. xi. c. 4.

*² The character which our celebrated connecter of the Old and New Testament has given us of this Darius, is,—That he was a prince of great wisdom, clemency, and justice, and has the honour to be recorded in Holy Writ, for a favourer of God's people, and a restorer of his temple at Jerusalem, and a promoter of his worship therein. For all this God was pleased to make him his instrument; and with respect to this, I doubt not, it was, that he blessed him with a numerous issue, a long reign, and great prosperity. For though he was not so very fortunate in his wars against the Scythians and Grecians; yet every where else, he had full success in all his undertakings, and not only restored and fully settled the empire of Cyrus, after it had been much shaken by Cambyses and

the Magian, but also added many large and rich provinces to it, especially those of India, Thrace, Macedonia, and the isles of the Ionian Sea. *Prideaux's Connection*, Anno 486.

† Darius had three sons by his first wife, the daughter of Gobrias, all born before his advancement to the throne, and four others by Atossa, the daughter of Cyrus, who were all born after it. Of the former, Artabasan was the eldest, of the latter, Xerxes: And as Darius advanced in years, between these two was the competition for the succession. Artabasan urged, that as he was the eldest son, according to the custom and usage of all nations, he ought to be preferred before any that was younger. But Xerxes replied to this, that he was the son of Darius by Atossa, the daughter of Cyrus, who was the first founder of the Persian empire; for which reason he held it just and reasonable, that the crown of Cyrus should rather come to a descendant of Cyrus, than to one that was not; and to this he added, that though Artabasan was the eldest son of Darius, yet he was not the eldest son of a king; that he was born when he was only a private person, and could therefore claim no more than to be heir of his private fortunes; but that, as to himself, he was the first-born after his father was king, and had therefore the best right to succeed him in the kingdom. Whereupon he was nominated to the succession, but not so much for the strength of his plea, as for the influence which his mother Atossa had over the inclinations of her husband. *Prideaux's Connection*, Anno 486.

(a) *Jewish Antiq.* lib. xi. c. 5. Where we have a copy of his letter to his governors and lieutenants of Syria, but too long to be inserted here.

(b) Dan. xi. 2, 3.

*³ After he had passed over the Hellespont, his land-army upon the muster was found to be one million and seven hundred thousand foot, and fourscore

A. M. 3475, prodigious armament, both by sea and land, he set out against the Greeks, * but with what foul disgrace he returned home from the inglorious expedition, when falling into contempt with his own subjects, not a long while after, he was murdered by the captain of his guard, and succeeded by his son † Artaxerxes Longimanus, whom the Scripture calls Ahasuerus, and was the same †² who had the beautiful Hebrew Esther for his queen.

Upon †³ some occasion or other, Ahasuerus appointed a solemn rejoicing in the city

thousand horse, besides his chariots and camels, for which, allowing twenty thousand more, the whole will amount to one million and eight hundred thousand men. His fleet consisted of twelve hundred and twenty ships of the line of battle, besides galleys, transports, victuallers, and other sorts of vessels that attended, which were three thousand more; and on board of all these were reckoned to be five hundred and seventeen thousand six hundred and ten men: So that the whole number of forces, by sea and land, which Xerxes brought with him out of Asia to invade Greece, amounted to two millions three hundred and seventeen thousand six hundred and ten men. After his passing the Hellespont, the nations on the other side that submitted to him, added to his land-army three hundred thousand men more, and two hundred and twenty ships to his fleet, on board of which were twenty-four thousand men; and the servants, eunuchs, women, sutlers, and all such other people as followed the camp, were computed to be no less than as many more. So that the whole number of the persons of all sorts that followed Xerxes in this expedition were at least five millions. This is Herodotus's account of that armament. And, considering that he is the most ancient author that has written of this war; was himself alive when it happened; and has treated of it with greater appearance of exactness than any other; there is reason to believe that his computation is the truest. *Prideaux's Connection*, Anno 480.

* For having lost most of the forces which he left behind him at the battle of Plataea, and a great many of his ships at the fight in the streights of Salamis, and being frightened with an apprehension, lest the conquerors should sail to the Hellespont, and there obstruct his return, he fled thither with all the haste and precipitation that he could; but at his coming thither, finding the bridge of boats which he had left there broken by storms, he, who had passed over that sea but a few months before with such pomp and pride, was forced to repass it in a poor fisher boat. A piece of history this, which Juvenal has not badly represented in these words:—

Ille tamen qualis rediit, Salamine relictâ,
In Corum atque Eurum solitus sævire flagellis,
Barbarus, æolio nunquam hoc in carcere passos?—
Sed qualis rediit? nempe unâ nave cruentis

Fluctibus, ac tardâ per densa cadavera prorâ. Sat. x.

† This prince, to distinguish him from others of that name, was called *Μακροσίγῃ* or *Longimanus*, upon the supposed length of his hands, with which it is said that he could have touched his knees, even when he stood up right; but this notwithstanding, it is report-

ed of him, that he was both the handsomest person of the age in which he lived, and a prince likewise of a very mild and generous disposition. *Prideaux's Connection*, Anno 465.

†² Our learned Usher is of opinion, that Darius Hystaspes was the king Ahasuerus who married Esther, viz. That Atossa was the Vashti, and Artystona the Esther of the Holy Scriptures. But Herodotus positively tells us, that Artystona was the daughter of Cyrus, and therefore could not be Esther, and that Atossa had four sons by Darius, besides daughters, all born to him after he was king, and therefore she could not be that queen Vashti who was divorced from the king her husband in the third year of his reign, Esther i. 3. nor he that Ahasuerus that divorced her. Joseph Scaliger is likewise of opinion, that Xerxes was the Ahasuerus, and Hamestris his queen, the Esther of the Holy Scriptures: But whatever seeming similitude there may be in the names (and this is the whole foundation of his conjecture), it is plain from Herodotus, that Xerxes had a son by Hamestris, who was marriageable in the seventh year of his reign, and therefore it is impossible that he should be Esther's, because Esther was not married to Ahasuerus until the seventh year of his reign, (Esther ii. 16.) and, considering that the choice of virgins was made for him in the fourth of his reign, and a whole year employed in their purifications, the soonest that she could have a son by him must be in the sixth; and therefore we may conclude (with Josephus, the Septuagint, and the Apocryphal additions to the book of Esther), that the Ahasuerus in Scripture was Artaxerxes Longimanus, and Esther an Hebrew virgin, as she is all along represented. *Prideaux's Connection*, Anno 465.

†³ The occasion of this great festival is very likely intimated to us in the phrase, "When the king Ahasuerus sat on the throne of his kingdom," chap. i. 2. i. e. enjoying peace and tranquillity through his large dominions; for the history of his accession to the throne is this:—Xerxes, his father, was privately murdered by Artabanus, captain of his guard. He coming to him (who was then but the third son) made him believe, that Darius his eldest brother had done it to make his way to the throne, and had a design likewise to cut him off, to secure himself in it. This Ahasuerus believing, went immediately to his brother's apartment, and, by the assistance of the wicked Artabanus and his guards, slew him, thinking all the while that he acted but in his own defence. Artabanus's drift was to seize on the throne himself; but for the present, he took Ahasuerus, and placed him thereon, with a design to pull him down as soon as matters

of Shushan, † which lasted for an hundred and eighty days; and in conclusion thereof, for seven days successively, he made a great feast for all the princes and governors of his provinces; as the queen Vashti, †² in her apartment, did for the ladies of the best distinction. In the last day of this feast, the king, either out of a frolic or fondness to his queen, sent seven of his chamberlains to conduct her into his presence, that he might shew her to the company, for she was extremely beautiful; and ordered, at the same time, that she should come with the crown on her head.

From Ezra iv. 7 to the end; all Esth. Neh. and part of Hagg. Zech. and Malachi.

This was an order so contrary to the usage of the Persians, and so little becoming her dignity and high station in life, that rather than be made a public spectacle, she adventured to disobey the king's command; which †³ incensed him to such a degree, that, †⁴ advising with his counsellors in what manner he was to punish her for this public affront, he came to this resolution (which was afterwards passed into an irreversible decree), that, for fear that Vashti's ill example should encourage other women to contemn and disobey their husbands, she should be deposed from her royal dignity, and an

were ripe for his own ascent. But when Ahasuerus understood this from Magabyzus, who had married one of his sisters, he took care to counterplot Artabanus, and to cut him and his whole party off before his treason was come to maturity; and for this, and some other successes against his brother Hystaspes, which settled him in a peaceable possession of the whole Persian empire, very probably it was, that a festival season of above an hundred and fourscore days continuance was appointed, which, even to this day (according to some travellers), is no uncommon thing in those parts of the world. *Prideaux's Connect. Anno 465*, and *Patrick's Comment. on Esther, chap. i.*

† Cyrus and the rest of the Persian kings, after the conquest of the Medes (whose country lay remote), settled their royal seat at Shushan, that they might not be too far from Babylon, and made it the capital of Persia. It stood upon the river Ulai, and was a place of such renown, that Strabo calls it Πόλιν ἀξιολογώτατην, "a city most worthy to be praised." The whole country about it was wonderfully fruitful, producing an hundred, and sometimes two hundred fold, as the same author informs us, lib. xv. Pliny, indeed, supposes, that Darius Hystaspes was the first founder of it, but he only enlarged and beautified it with a most magnificent palace, which Aristotle (in his book *De Mundo*) calls θαυμαστὸν βασιλεῖον οἶκον "a wonderful royal palace, shining with gold, amber, and ivory." Nor is it altogether foreign to this purpose what our learned Lightfoot (*De Templo, chap. 3.*) tells us, viz. That the outward gate of the eastern wall of the temple was called "the Gate of Shushan," and had the figure of that city carved on it, in acknowledgment of the decree which this Darius granted in that place, in order to permit and encourage the Jews to rebuild their temple at Jerusalem. *Patrick's Commentary on Esther, chap. i.*; and *Calmet's Dictionary* under the word *Shushan*.

†² It has been a great enquiry among the learned who this Vashti was. Those who make the Ahasuerus in Scripture to be Darius the son of Hystaspes, suppose that she was Atossa, the daughter of Cyrus, who was first married to Cambyzes, her own brother, then to the Magian, who would have passed for Smerdis, and last of all to Darius. Others suppose, that

she was the own sister of Ahasuerus, because the Persians, in those days, made no scruple of these kinds of marriages; though there is much more reason to think, that before her marriage, there had been such a collection of virgins made for the use of the king, as was before Esther's, (this is implied in chap. ii. 19.) and that having the good fortune then of obtaining the preference in the king's esteem, she was created queen; but being perhaps a woman of no high descent, her family extraction for that reason might be concealed. *Calmet's Dictionary* under the name.

†³ The expression in the text is, "That the king was very wroth, and his anger burned in him," Esther i. 12. It was more immoderate, because his blood was heated with wine, which made his passion too strong for his reason; otherwise he would not have thought it decent for the queen, nor safe for himself, to have her beauty (which was very great) exposed in this unusual manner; especially if there be any thing in what the Jewish Targum seems to suggest, viz. That he commanded her to be brought quite naked, that her comely proportion might be seen as well as her face. *Patrick's Commentary on Esther, chap. i.*

†⁴ The words in our translation are "the wise men who knew the times" chap. i. 13. And from hence some have observed, that, as the Persian kings did nothing without their Magi, who were great pretenders to astrology, men of this sort were called, to know whether it was a proper time to set about the thing which the king might have then in his mind. For such was the superstition of the eastern people, that (as the satyrists remarks),

Quicquid

Dixerit astrologus, credent a fonte relatum

Ammonis.

Juv. Sat. 6.

The explication, however, which Viringa gives us of the original words, *Jodehe habitim*, is far from being improper, viz. That they were men well versed in ancient histories, and in the laws and customs of their country; and were therefore able to give the king counsel in all extraordinary and perplexed cases, as this certainly was. *Patrick's and Le Clerc's Commentaries on Esther i.*

A. M. 3475,
&c. or 4947.
Ant. Chris.
529, &c.
or 461.

order be issued out for the making a collection of the fairest virgins, in every province through the whole empire, that out of them one might be chosen, whom the king should like best to be queen in the room of the divorced Vashti.

At this time there lived at Shushan a certain Jew, of the tribe of Benjamin, named Mordecai, a descendant of those who had been carried captive to Babylon with Jehoia-kim king of Judah, and by his attendance at (a) the king's gate, seems to have been one of † the porters of the royal palace. He having no children of his own, bred up Hadassah, †² his uncle's daughter, who being a very beautiful young woman, among other virgins was made choice of upon this occasion. As soon as she was carried to court, she was committed to the care of an eunuch, who was to have the custody of these virgins, and by her sweet and engaging behaviour, made herself so acceptable to him, that he assigned her the best apartment in the house appointed for their habitation, and gave her a preference in other matters before all the rest of the virgins.

It was the custom at this time, that every virgin, thus taken into the palace for the king's use, was to go through †⁵ a course of purification by sweet oils and perfumes, for a whole year; which when Hadassah had done, and so prepared herself for the king's bed, the king was so highly delighted with her, that, intending to make her †⁴ more than a concubine, he continued her in his own palace, and in a short time set the royal diadem upon her head, and made her queen in the room of Vashti. The nuptials were celebrated with great magnificence. A splendid entertainment was made, which, in honour to the new queen, was called Esther's feast; (for that was the Persian name which had lately been given her) and the king, upon this joyful occasion, not only gave †⁶ rich presents to the queen, and largesses to the guests, but granted pardons likewise

(a) Esther ii. 19.

† But perhaps he might have been an officer of an higher rank, because it was an order instituted by Cyrus, (as Xenophon, in his *Cyropæd.* lib. 8. informs us,) that all persons whatever, who had any employment at court, should attend at the palace-gate, (where there was, doubtless, a proper waiting-room for their reception,) that they might be in readiness whenever they were wanted or called for; and that this custom was afterwards continued, we may learn from Herodotus, lib. iii. c. 120. *Le Clerc's* Commentary on Esther, chap. ii.

†² This woman was born in Babylon, and therefore, in analogy to that language, they gave her the name of *Hadassah*, which, in Chaldee, signifies a *myrtle*; but her Persian name was Esther, which some (a little incongruously) derive from *esther*, a *star*, and others from *satar*, which signifies *hidden*, because she was concealed in Mordecai's house; or rather, because her nation was concealed, and she not known, until Mordecai's merit and services to the crown came to be rewarded. *Patrick's* Commentary.

†³ The reason is assigned in the following verse for their being kept so long in this course, viz. that for six months they might be anointed with the oil of myrrh, which, besides the fragrancy of its smell, was good to make the skin soft and smooth, to and clear it from all manner of scurf; and for six more with sweet odours, which, in these hot countries, were necessary to take away all ill scents, and (as some think) to make the body more vigorous. But besides this, there might be something of state in making those vassals (for such they were accounted) wait, before they were admitted to the honour of the king's bed; and

something of precaution too, in keeping them seclude for so long a time, that the king might be satisfied that he was not imposed upon by a child begotten by any other man. *Patrick's* Commentary, and *Pool's* Annotations on Esther ii. 12.

†⁴ According to this account of things, this Persian monarch seems to have had but one wife, at least but one in chief favour and esteem with him, though it is certain he could not fail of having an infinite number of secondary wives or concubines. This was the name of every one that was taken from among the virgins, (who had a separate house for themselves) and conducted to the king's bed; where having passed a night, she returned no more to the virgin's apartments, but was, the next morning, received into the house of the concubines, and there treated in the state and port of one of the king's wives; for such they were accounted. No man was permitted to marry them as long as the king lived; and upon his demise, they generally fell to his successor. Of these Darius Nothus is reckoned to have had no less than three hundred and sixty. *Pool's* Annotations.

†⁵ The manner of the Persian king was, to give his queens, at their marriage, such a city to buy them clothes; another, for their hair; another, for their necklaces; and so on for the rest of their expences. And, as it was customary for him, (according to the testimony of Herodotus) upon his accession to the throne, to remit the tribute that was due to him from all the cities; so he might, upon this occasion, out of his abundant joy, make a release to the provinces, and forgive them some of the duties and imposts that they were bound to pay him. *Patrick's* Commentary.

to his subjects, and a relaxation of tribute for some time to all the provinces of his dominions.

At Esther's first going to court, Mordecai had given her a strict caution not to discover that she was a Jew, lest the king should despise her for being a captive, which she carefully observed; and he, for the same reason, concealed his relation to her, contenting himself with the little employment he had at court, until a more favourable opportunity should present itself. In the mean time, he had the good fortune to discover a conspiracy, which † two of the king's chamberlains were forming against his life. This he communicated to the queen, and the queen acquainted the king with it in Mordecai's name, so that the conspirators were seized, convicted, and executed: But though the whole affair was recorded in the Persian annals, yet Mordecai, for the present, was no more thought on, until his merit and great services came to be remembered upon this occasion.

Haman, an Amalekite, of the posterity of Agag, king of Amalek, in the time of Saul, was become the king's chief favourite, and all the servants at court were ordered to shew him great respect and reverence; which every one readily did except Mordecai, who, upon his passing to and fro, took no manner of notice of him. * This so exasperated the proud Amalekite, that, being informed that Mordecai was a Jew, he was resolved, in revenge of the affront, not to destroy him only, but his whole nation with him: But because there might be some danger in so bold an undertaking, he called together his diviners, to find out what day would be most lucky for his putting his design in execution.

The way of divination, then in use among the Eastern people, was by casting lots; and therefore, having tried in this manner, first each month, and then each day in every month, they came at last to a determination, that †² the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is called Adar, would be most fortunate for his design. Whereupon he went to the king, and having insinuated to him, "That there were a certain people, dispersed all over his empire, who called themselves Jews, and who, having laws and ordinances of their own, despised all his edicts and injunctions; that their principles, in short, tended to the disturbance of the good order of his government, and the breach of all uniformity; that, upon these accounts, it was not consistent with the rules of policy to allow them any farther toleration; and therefore he proposed, that they should be destroyed and extirpated all out of the empire of Persia; and lest the loss of so many subjects should be thought a diminution of the king's revenue, he proposed to make up the defect out of his own private fortune." The king was easy enough to be

From Ezra iv.
7. to the end;
all Esth. Neh.
and part of
Ezra. Zech.
and alachi.

† These were two great men, who perhaps kept the door of the king's bed-chamber, and, being either incensed at the divorce of Vashti, (whose creatures they were) or at the advancement of Esther, who, in all probability, would raise her kinsman Mordecai to a superiority over them, took disgust thereat, and so resolved to revenge themselves on the king for it. *Prideaux's Connection*, and *Patrick's Commentary*.

* Josephus tells us, that Haman, taking notice of this singularity in Mordecai, asked him, what countryman he was? And finding him to be a Jew, broke out into a violent exclamation at the insolence of such a scoundrel, that, when all the natives of the free-born Persians made no difficulty in doing him that honour, this slave of a Jew should presume to affront him; and in this rage, he took up a desperate resolution, not only to be revenged of Mordecai, but to destroy the whole race of Jews likewise: Well remembering, that his ancestors, the Amalekites, had been formerly beaten out of their land, and utterly exterminated by

the Jews. *Jewish Antiquities*, lib. xi. c. 6.

†² It was in the first month in the year, when Haman began to cast lots, and the time for the execution of the Jews was, by these lots, delayed until the last month in the year; which plainly shews, "That though the lot be cast into the lap, yet the whole disposing thereof is from the Lord," Prov. xvi. 33. For hereby almost a whole year intervened between the design and its execution, which gave time for Mordecai to acquaint queen Esther with it, and for her to intercede with the king for the revoking or suspending the decree, and thereby disappointing the conspiracy: For we can hardly think, (what Le Clerc suggests) that Haman gave the Jews all this time that they might make their escape out of the kingdom, and not stay to be slain, which possibly might bring an odium upon himself, when it came to be known by whose instigation this massacre was committed. *Patrick's* and *Le Clerc's* Commentaries.

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wrought upon by this court minion; who, having obtained his royal consent, ordered the secretaries of state * to form a decree pursuant hereunto, which, when it was signed, he sent † by posts to all lieutenants, and governors of provinces, with strict charge to destroy, and cause to be killed, all the Jews of whatever sex or condition, both young and old, that were any where within their jurisdiction, on the thirteenth of Adar following.

The publication of this horrid decree occasioned an universal grief and lamentation wherever the Jews inhabited; and, in the city of †² Shushan, (which was not well pleased with it) Mordecai in particular having put on sackcloth, and covered his head

* The decree itself (according to Josephus) was to this effect.—

“The great king Artaxerxes, to the hundred and seven and twenty governors of the provinces between India and Ethiopia, greeting:

Whereas it hath pleased God to give me the command of so many nations, and a dominion over the rest of the world as large as I myself desire, I being resolved to do nothing that may be tyrannical, or grievous towards my people, and to bear a gentle and easy hand over them, with an eye more especially to the preservation of their peace and liberties, and to settle them in a state of tranquillity and happiness, not to be shaken: all this I have taken into mature deliberation; and being given to understand by my trusty and well-beloved friend and counsellor Haman, a person of a tried faith, prudence, and justice, and whom I esteem above all others, that there is a mixture of a sort of inhuman people among my subjects, that take upon them to govern by their own laws, and to prescribe ways to themselves in contempt of public order and government; men depraved both in their customs and in their manners, and enemies not only to monarchy, but to the methods of our royal administration—this is therefore to will and require, that, upon notice given you by Haman (who is to me as a father) of the persons intended by this my proclamation, you put all the said persons, men, women, and children, to the sword, without any commiseration or favour, in a strict pursuance of my decree. And it is my further command, that you put this in execution upon the thirteenth day of the twelfth month of the present year, to make but one day's work of the destruction of all mine and your enemies, in order to a future peace and security of all our lives after.” *Jewish Antiq.* lib. xi. c. 6.

† The first institution of posts is generally ascribed to the Persians; for the kings of Persia, (as Diodorus Siculus, lib. xix. observes) that they might have intelligence of what passed in all the provinces of their vast dominions, placed centinels on eminences, at convenient distances, where towers were built, and these centinels gave notice of public occurrences to one another with a very loud and shrill voice; by which means news was transmitted from one extremity of the kingdom to the other with great expedition. But as this could be practised only in the case of general news, which might be communicated to the whole nation, Cyrus (as Xenophon relates, *Cyropæd.*

lib. viii.) set up couriers, places for post-horses on all high-roads and offices, where they might deliver their packets to one another. This, says our author, they did night and day; so that no rain or hard weather being to stop them, in the judgment of many they went faster than cranes could fly. The like is said by Herodotus, lib. viii. And he acquaints us farther, that Xerxes, in his famous expedition against Greece, planted posts from the Ægean Sea to Shushan at certain distances, as far as a horse could ride with speed, that thereby he might send notice to his capital city of whatever might happen in his army. The Greeks borrowed the use of posts from the Persians; and in imitation of them, called them *ὑπὸ γαλῶν*. Among the Romans, Augustus was the person who set up public posts, who at first were running footmen, but were afterwards changed into post chariots and horses for the greater expedition. Adrian improved upon this; and having reduced the posts to great regularity, discharged the people from the obligation they were under before, of furnishing horses and chariots. With the empire, the use of posts declined. About the year 807, Charlemaigne endeavoured to restore them, but his design was not prosecuted by his successors. In France, Lewis XI. set up posts at two leagues distance through the kingdom. In Germany, count Taxis set them up, and had for his recompence, in 1616, a grant of the office of post-master-general to himself and his heirs for ever. Above eight hundred years ago, couriers were set up in the Ottoman empire; and at this time there are some among the Chinese; but their appointment is only to carry orders from the king and the governors of provinces, and, in a word, for public affairs and those of the greatest consequence. *Calmet's Dictionary*, under the word.

†² Not only the Jews, but a great many others in Shushan, might be concerned at this horrid decree, either because they were related to them, or engaged with them in worldly concerns, or perhaps out of mere humanity and compassion to so vast a number of innocent people, now appointed as sheep for the slaughter. They might apprehend likewise, that upon the execution of the decree, some sedition or tumult might ensue; that in so great a slaughter it was hard to tell who would escape without being killed or plundered, because those who were employed in this bloody work, would be more mindful to enrich themselves than to observe their orders. *Pool's Annotations*, and *Patrick's* and *Le Clerc's Commentaries*.

with ashes, went along the streets † bemoaning his and his countrymen's hard fate, even until he came to the palace gate; which when the queen understood, and sent to enquire the cause, he returned her a copy of the king's decree, whereby she might plainly perceive what mischief was intended against all the nation, unless by a timely intercession with the king she would endeavour * to prevent it.

From Ezra iv. 7. to the end; all Esth. Neh. and part of Hagg. Zech. and Malachi.

Esther, at first excused herself from engaging in this affair, because an ordinance was passed, inhibiting any person, whether man or woman, upon pain of death, from approaching the king's presence without a special order. But when he returned her in answer "that the decree extended to the whole Jewish nation without any exception; that if it came to execution, she must expect to escape no more than the rest; that God very probably raised her to her present greatness on purpose that she might save and protect his people; but that if she neglected to do this, and their deliverance should come some other way, then should she and her father's house, by the righteous and just judgment of God, most certainly perish:" which so roused her drooping courage, that she sent him word again, that he and all the Jews in Shushan should †² fast for her three days, (as she herself intended to do) and offer up their humble supplications to God, that he would prosper her in so hazardous an undertaking, and then she would not fail to address the king, though it were at the utmost peril of her life.

The people fasted as she had enjoined them; and on the third day she dressed herself in her royal apparel, and †³ went toward the room where the king was sitting upon his throne in the inner part of the palace. Upon the first sight of her, he held out his golden sceptre, (a token that he pardoned her presumption and spared her life) and then asked her what the request was that she had to make to him. At the extension of this favour, she approached nearer, and having touched †⁴ the end of his sceptre, on-

† The latter Targum upon the book of Esther, gives us this account of Mordecai's behaviour upon this sad occasion, viz. that in the midst of the streets he made his complaint, saying, "what an heavy decree is this which the king and Haman have passed, not against a part of us, but against us all, to root us out of the earth!" whereupon all the Jews flocked about him; and having caused the book of the law to be brought to the gate of Shushan, he being covered with sackcloth, read therein these words out of Deut. iv. 30, 31. "When thou art in tribulation, and all these things are come upon thee in the latter days, if thou turn to the Lord thy God, and shall be obedient to his voice, (for the Lord thy God is a merciful God) he will not forsake thee nor destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which he swore unto them:" After which he exhorted them to fasting, humiliation, and repentance, according to the example of the Ninevites. *Patrick's Commentary.*

* Ever since the reign of Dejoces, king of Media, Herodotus, lib. i. informs us, that, for the preservation of royal majesty, it was enacted, "That no one should be admitted into the king's presence, but that if he had any business with him, he should transact it by the intercourse of his ministers." The custom passed from the Medes to the Persians, and therefore we find it in the same historian, lib. iii. that, after the seven Persian princes had killed the Magian who had usurped the throne, they came to this agreement, that whoever should be elected king, should allow the others to have at all times a ready access to his presence, (which is an implication that they had it not before) whenever they should desire it, except only

when he was accompanying with any of his wives. This therefore was the ancient law of the country, and not procured by Haman, as some imagine; though it cannot be denied, but that the reason of the law at first might be, not only the preservation of the majesty and safety of the king's person, but a contrivance likewise of the great officers of state, that they might engross the king to themselves, by allowing admittance to none but whom they should think proper to introduce. *Pool's Annotations, and Le Clerc's Commentary.*

†² This is not to be understood as if the people were to take no manner of sustenance for three days, because few or none could undergo that, but only, either that they should abstain from all delicacies, and content themselves with coarse fare, as Josephus expounds it, or that they should make no set meals of dinner or supper in their families, but eat and drink no more than would suffice to sustain nature, and support them in prayer to God for a blessing upon her undertaking. *Patrick's and Le Clerc's Commentaries.*

†³ But first, says the latter Targum, she made a solemn prayer to God, with many tears, as soon as she was dressed, saying, "Thou art the great God, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of my father Benjamin; as thou didst deliver Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah out of the fiery furnace, and Daniel from the lion's den, so deliver me now out of the hand of the king, and give me grace and favour in his eyes," &c.

†⁴ A sceptre was the ensign of the highest and most absolute authority; and therefore some have observed, that when Mordecai was advanced to the

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ly desired that he and Haman would come to a banquet which she had prepared for him. Haman, who happened then to be absent, was called to attend the king; and when the king and he were at the banquet, he asked her again concerning her petition, promising that he would grant it her, even were it to extend to half his kingdom: But † her request again was no more, than that he and Haman would favour her again the next day with their company at the like entertainment, and that then she would not fail to disclose her request.

Haman * was not a little proud of the peculiar honour which both the king and queen had done him; but upon his return home, seeing Mordecai sitting at the palace gate, and refusing to shew him the least obeisance, though †² he restrained himself at present, yet so moved was he with indignation against him, that when he came home, and related to his family the favours which that day he had received, he could not forbear complaining of the affront and disrespect which Mordecai had put upon him; insomuch, that his wife, and others that were present, advised him to have a gibbet of †³ fifty cubits high instantly erected, and the very next morning to go to the king, and obtain a grant of him to have that insolent fellow hanged upon it.

greatest dignity next the king, having the royal robes on, and other ensigns of royal dignity, no mention is made of any sceptre, for that was proper and peculiar to the king; and the queen's touching, or (as some say) kissing it, was a token of her subjection and thankfulness for his favour. But Josephus has mightily improved upon the story; for he tells us, "That as the queen with her two handmaids approached the room where the king was, leaning gently upon one, and the other bearing up her train, her face being covered with such a blush as expressed a graceful majesty, but at the same time some doubtful apprehensions upon her approaching of the king, mounted on his throne, and the sparkling glory of his robes, that were all over embroidered with gold, pearl, and precious stones, she was taken all on a sudden with a trembling at so surprising a sight; and upon fancying that the king looked upon her as if he were uneasy and out of humour, she fell into the arms of one of her maids in a direct swoon. This accident, says he, by the intervention of God's holy will and Providence, put the king into a fright, for fear she might not come to herself again; so that making what haste he could from his throne, he took her up in his arms, and with the kindest words that could be, gave her this comfort:—That no advantage should be made of the law to her prejudice, though she came without calling, because the decree extended only to subjects, whereas he looked upon her as his companion and partner in the empire." *Jewish Antiq.* lib. xi. c. 6.

† Her intention in desiring thus to entertain the king twice at her banquet, before she made known her petition, was, that thereby she might the more endear herself to him, and dispose him the better to grant her request; for which reason she thought it a piece of no bad policy to invite his first favourite to come along with him. But in the whole matter, the singular Providence of God is not a little conspicuous, which so disposed her mind, that the high honour which the king bestowed upon Mordecai the next day might fall out in the meantime, and so make way for

her petition, which would come in very seasonably at the banquet of wine: For as then it was most likely for the king to be in a pleasant humour, so it was most usual for the Persians to enter upon business of state when they began to drink. *Le Clerc's* and *Patrick's* Commentary, and *Prideaux's* Connection, anno 453.

* Athenæus mentions it as a peculiar honour, which no Grecian ever had before or after, that Artaxerxes vouchsafed to invite Timagoras the Cretan to dine even at the table where his relations eat, and to send sometimes a part of what was served up at his own; which some Persians looked upon as a diminution of his majesty, and a prostitution of their nation's honour. In the life of Artaxerxes, Plutarch tells us, that none but the king's mother, and his real wife, were permitted to sit at his table; and therefore he mentions it as a condescension in that prince, that he sometimes invited his brothers: So that this particular favour was a matter that Haman had some reason to value himself upon. *Le Clerc's* Commentary.

†² It may seem a little strange, that so proud a man as Haman was, should not be prompted immediately to avenge himself on Mordecai for his contemptuous usage of him, since he had enough about him, no doubt, who, upon the least intimation of his pleasure, would have done it; and since he, who had interest enough with his prince to procure a decree for the destruction of a whole nation, might have easily obtained a pardon for having killed one obscure and infamous member of it. But herein did the wise and powerful Providence of God appear, that it disposed Haman's heart (contrary to his own inclination and interest), instead of employing his power against his enemy, to put fetters, as it were, upon his own hands. *Pool's* Annotations.

†³ That men might at a great distance see him, to the increase of his disgrace (as Haman might think), and that struck with the greater terror by that spectacle, they might not dare, for the future, to despise or offend him. *Patrick's* Commentary, and *Pool's* Annotations.

This project he liked very well, and therefore caused the gibbet to be set up: But when he came to court in the morning, he found that things had taken quite another turn. The king, that very morning, happened to awake sooner than ordinary, and being not able to compose himself to sleep again, he called for † the annals of his reign, and ordered a person that was then in waiting to read them to him. The reader went on until he came to the passage which made mention of Mordecai's discovery of the treason of the two chamberlains; and when the king upon enquiry was given to understand, that the man, for so signal a service, had received no reward at all, he called unto Haman (who was waiting for admittance upon a quite different intent), and asked him, What it was he would advise him to do to the man on whom he designed to confer some marks of his favour?

Haman, who never dreamed but that the person he meant of was himself, was resolved to lay it on thick; and therefore he gave advice, * that the royal robe should be brought, which the king, on solemn occasions, was wont to wear; the horse, which was kept for his own riding, *² and the crown, which was used to be set upon the horse's head, *³

† In these diaries (which we now call journals) wherein was set down what passed every day, the manner of the Persians was, to record the names of those who had done the king any signal service. Accordingly Josephus informs us, "That upon the secretary's reading these journals, he took notice of such a person, who had great honours and possessions given him, as a reward for a glorious and remarkable action; and of such another, who made his fortune by the bounties of his prince, for his fidelity: But that when he came to the particular story of the conspiracy of the two eunuchs against the person of the king, and of the discovery of this treason by Mordecai, the secretary read it over, and was passing forward to the next, when the king stopped him, and asked if that person had any reward given him for his service, &c. Which shews indeed a singular Providence of God, that the secretary should read in that very part of the book wherein the service of Mordecai was recorded. But the latter Targum (to make a thorough miracle of it) tells us, that when the reader opened the book at the place where mention was made of Mordecai, he turned over the leaves, and would have read in another, but that the leaves flew back again to the same place where he opened it at first, so that he was forced to read that story to the king. *Patrick's Commentary*, and *Jewish Antiq.* lib. xi. c. 6

* To form a notion of that height of pride and arrogance to which Haman (who thought all the honours he specified were designed for him) was arrived, we may observe, that, for any one to put on the royal robe, without the privity and consent of the king, was, among the Persians, accounted a capital crime. To which purpose Plutarch, in his life of Artaxerxes, has related this story:—"That one day, when in hunting, the king happened to tear his garment, and Tiribazus was telling him of it, the king asked him what he should do? Why, put on another, says Tiribazus, and give that to me. That I will, says the king, but then I enjoin you not to wear it. Tiribazus however (who was a good kind of a man enough, but a little weak and silly), adventured to put it on, with all its fine ornaments; and when some of the no-

bles began to resent it, as a thing not lawful for any subject to do, I allow him, says the king, laughing at the figure he made, to wear the fine trinkets as a woman, and the robe as a madman." *Le Clerc's Commentary*.

*² There was a custom, not unlike this, among the Hebrews (as appears from the history of Solomon, 1 Kings i. 33), for the person that was to be declared successor to the crown, on the day of his inauguration, to be mounted on the king's horse; and, to the like custom among the Persians, it is highly probable, that the poet Statius, in his description of a young king succeeding to his father's throne, may allude.

Sicut Achæmenius solium gentesque paternas
Excepit si fortè puer, cui vivere patrem
Tutius, incertâ formidine gaudia librat,
An fidi proceres, an pugnet vulgus habenis,
Cui latus Euphratæ, cui Caspia limina mandat,
Sumere nunc arcus, ipsumque onerare veretur
PATRIS EQUUM, visusque sibi nec sceptrâ capaci
Sustentare manu, nec adhuc implere tiam.

Thebaid. lib. viii.

*³ Commentators are not agreed, whether this crown was placed upon the king's head or his horse's. Those who refer it to the king, will have it to be what we call a turban, made of fine white and purple linen, which it was death for any one to put on his head without the king's express order; to which purpose Arrian (*Alex. Exped.* lib. vii.) tells us this story:—"That as Alexander was sailing on the Euphrates, and his turban happened to fall off among some reeds, one of the watermen immediately jumped in and swam to it; but as he could not bring it back in his hand without wetting it, he put it upon his head, and so returned with it. Whereupon most historians that have wrote of Alexander (says he) tell us, that he gave him a talent of silver for this expression of his zeal to serve him, but, at the same time, ordered his head to be struck off, for presuming to put on the royal diadem." Other commentators are of opinion, that this *Keter*, which we render *crown*, being a word of a large signification, will equally denote that ornament which the horse, that the king rode, wore upon his head: As it must be acknowledged, that this applica-

From Ezra, iv. 7. to the end; all Est. Neh. and part of Hagg. Zech. and Malachi.

A. M. 3175,
&c. or 4947.
Ant. Chris.
529, &c.
or 464.

and that, with this robe, the person whom the king thought proper to distinguish should be arrayed, and the chief man in the kingdom appointed to lead his horse by the reins, walking before him in the quality of an officer, and proclaiming, "Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delights to honour." "Take then the horse and the robe," says the king, and do all that thou hast mentioned to Mordecai the Jew, who has not been yet rewarded for the discovery of the treason of the two eunuchs that intended to have taken away my life."

Nothing certainly could cut a proud man more to the heart than to be employed in such an office; but the king's command was positive, so that Haman was forced to do it, how much soever it might go against the grain: And when the irksome ceremony was over, he returned to his house, lamenting the disappointment and great mortification he had met with, in being forced to pay so signal an honour to his most hated enemy. But while he was relating this to his family, and they thereupon expressing some uneasy apprehensions as if this were a very bad omen, one of the queen's chamberlains came to his house to hasten him to the banquet; and having seen the gallows which had been set up the night before, he fully informed himself of the intent for which it was prepared.

When the king and Haman were set down to the entertainment, the king asked Esther again what her request was; renewing his promise, that he would not fail to grant it her, even though it extended to the half of his kingdom: "But my petition, O king, says she, is only for my own life and the life of my people, because there is a design laid against us, not to make us bond-men and bond-women (for then I should have been silent), but to slay and destroy us all. If therefore I have found favour in thy sight, O king, let my life and the life of my people be given at my request." At this the king asking, with some commotion, who it was that durst do any such thing? The Haman then present, she told him, was the contriver of all the plot: Whereupon the king, rising up from the banquet in a passion, † went into the garden adjoining; and Haman, taking this opportunity, †² fell prostrate on the bed where the queen was sitting to supplicate his life; but the king coming in the mean time, and seeing him in this posture, "What, will he ravish the queen before my eyes?" cried out aloud: Whereupon those that were in waiting came and covered his face, as a token of the king's indignation against him; and when the chamberlain, who had been to call him to the banquet, acquainted the king of the gallows which he had prepared for Mordecai, who had saved the king's life, he gave immediate orders that he * should be

tion of the thing agrees better with the signification and order of the Hebrew words; with the following verses, wherein no mention is made of the Keter, but only of the robe and the horse to which this crown belonged; and with the custom of the Persians, who used to put a certain ornament (in Italian called *focco*) upon the head of that horse whereon the king was mounted. *Le Clerc's* and *Patrick's* Commentaries, and *Pool's* Annotations.

† Partly as disdaining the company of so audacious and ungrateful a person; partly to cool and allay his spirit, boiling and struggling with such a variety of passions; and partly to consider within himself the heinousness of Haman's crime, the mischief which himself had like to have done by his own rashness, and what punishment was fit to be inflicted on so vile a miscreant. *Patrick's* Commentary, and *Pool's* Annotations.

†² It was a custom among the Persians, as well as other nations, to sit, or rather to lie upon beds when

they ate or drank; and therefore when Haman fell down as a suppliant at the feet of Esther, and (as the manner was among the Greeks and Romans, and not improbably among the Persians) embraced her knees, the king might pretend that he was offering violence to the queen's chastity. Not that he believed that this was his intention, but in his furious passion he turned every thing to the worst sense, and made use of it to aggravate his crime. *Patrick's* Commentary.

* Josephus indeed tells us that he died on the cross: But others have observed, that crucifixion was not a Persian punishment; and Salmasius (in his book de Cruce) shews, that it was the manner of the Persians first to cut off the heads of malefactors, and then to hang them on a gibbet. However this be, "I cannot pass over the wonderful harmony of Providence" (says Josephus) without a remark upon the Almighty power, and the admirable justice and wisdom of God, not only in bringing Haman to his deserved punishment, but entrapping him in the very

hanged thereon, (which accordingly was done), and his whole estate given to the queen, whereof she appointed Mordecai her steward. At the same time she informed the king of her near relation to Mordecai; so that he took him into his royal favour, advanced him to great power, riches, and dignity in the empire, and made him keeper of his signet, in the same manner as Haman had been before.

From Ezra iv. 7. to the end; all Esth. Neh. and part of Hagg Zech. and Malachi.

But though Haman was thus removed, yet the decree which he had procured remained still in force; nor could it be repealed, because the laws of the Medes and Persians were such, that nothing written in the king's name and signed with the royal signet could be reversed. All therefore that the king could do (upon the queen's second petition to have the decree cancelled) was to grant the Jews (by another * decree) such a power to defend themselves against all that should assault them on the day † when the former decree was to be executed, as might render it in a great measure ineffectual.

To this purpose a fresh edict was drawn up in the third month, signed by the king, and transmitted to the provinces: So that when the thirteenth day of Adar came, by the means of these different and discordant decrees, a war was commenced between the Jews and their enemies through the whole Persian empire; but as the rulers of the several provinces, and other officers of the king, well understood what power and credit Esther and Mordecai then had with him, they so favoured the Jews every where, that on that day they slew, in the whole empire, seventy five thousand persons, and in the city of Shushan, on that day and the next, eight hundred more; among whom were †² the ten sons of Haman, whom, by a special order from the king, they hanged, per-

same snare that he had laid for another, and turning a malicious invention upon the head of the inventor."

Nec lex est justior ulla,

Quam necis artifices arte perire suâ.

Antiq. lib. xi. c. 6.

* Josephus has given us a true copy, as he says, of this decree, or (as he calls it) of the letters which Artaxerxes sent to the magistrates of all the nations that lie between India and Ethiopia, under the command of an hundred and seven and twenty princes:—"Wherein he represents the abuse which favourites are wont to make of their power and credit with their prince, by insulting their inferiors, by flying in the face of those that raised them, and (to gratify their resentments) calumniating the innocent, and putting honest men in danger of their lives: Wherein he makes mention of the uncommon favours and honours which he had bestowed upon Haman the Amalekite, who had notwithstanding taken measures to supplant him of his kingdom, to destroy Mordecai, the preserver of his life, together with his dearest wife the queen, and to extirpate the whole nation of Jews, who were good and peaceable subjects, and worshippers of that God to whom he was indebted for the possession and preservation of his empire: Wherein he acquaints them, that for these wicked and treasonable practices, having caused him and his whole family to be executed before the gates of Susa, his royal pleasure, by these presents, was, that they should not only discharge the Jews from all the pains and penalties to which they are made liable by his letters which Haman had sent them; but that they should likewise aid and assist them in vindicating themselves upon those that spitefully and injuriously oppressed them: And wherein he tells them, that

whereas the time appointed for the utter destruction of these people was to have been on the thirteenth day of the month Adar, his further pleasure was, that the same month and day should be employed in their rescue and deliverance; and that if any person, either by disobedience or neglect, should act in any thing contrary to the tenor of this his imperial command, he should be liable to military execution by fire and sword." [This is a very unfair account of the decree. The true account is undoubtedly that of the text and of Scripture. The king might, and probably did, inform the magistrates that he had authorised the Jews to defend themselves, but he could do nothing more, nor would more be necessary.]

† It might be presumed, that some out of hatred to the Jews might be inclinable to obey Haman's decree: for though he himself was gone, yet it cannot be imagined that all the friends and creatures that he had made perished with him. He might have a great party everywhere, and some of them so furiously enraged at his fall, as (even at the hazard of their own lives) would not fail to shew their indignation at those who were the occasion of it; and therefore this second decree, procured by Mordecai, gave them authority, if any attempt was made upon them, either in great bodies or small parties, not only to defend themselves and repel them, but to make as great a slaughter of them as they were able, and even to take possession of their goods, as Haman had procured them licence (chap. iii. 13.) to seize the goods of the Jews. *Patrick's Commentary.*

†² It is not unlikely that many might be enraged at his death, and his sons in particular might set themselves at the head of those who were bold enough to attempt the destruction of the Jews in Shushan, being

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haps on the same gallows whereon their father had hung before: And in memory of this their wonderful deliverance, the Jews did then (and have ever since) on the fourteenth and fifteenth day of the month Adar, keep a great festival, which they called † "the feast of lots." But proceed we now to some other affairs.

In the beginning of the seventh year of Ahasuerus, Ezra, (a priest descended from Seraiah the high priest, who was slain by Nebuchadnezzar when he burnt the temple and city of Jerusalem), a man of great learning, and excellently †² skilled in the know-

resolved to revenge their father's death, though in so doing they were sure to meet their own. And this seems to suggest one reason why Esther was so solicitous to have their dead bodies (for they were slain already) hung upon the gallows, chap. ix. 13. even because they had shewn more malice and indignation against the Jews, and on the day when the cruel edict came to take place, had made more desperate attacks upon them than any, though the reason of the state, in this severity, might be to expose the family to the greater infamy, and to deter other counsellors from abusing the king at any time with false representations. For though the Jews suffered none to hang on the tree (as they called the gallows) longer than till the evening of the day whereon they were executed; yet other nations let them hang until they were consumed, (as appears from the story of the Gibeonites, 2 Sam. xxi. 9, 10.) or devoured by crows, vultures, or other ravenous creatures; from whence that vulgar saying among the Romans, *pascere in cruce corvos*, had its rise. *Patrick's Commentary*, and *Pool's Annotations*.

† *Pur*, in the Persian language, signifies *a lot*, and the feast of Purim, or lots (which had its name from Haman's casting lots, in order to divine which day would be most lucky to prefix for the murder of all the Jews in the whole Persian dominions) is to this very day celebrated by the Jews, with some peculiar ceremonies, but most of them reducible to these three things, reading, resting, and feasting. Before the reading, which is performed in the synagogue, and begins in the evening as soon as the stars appear, they make use of three forms of prayer: In the first of these they praise God for counting them worthy to attend this Divine service; in the second, they thank him for the miraculous preservation of their ancestors; and in the third, they bless his holy name for having continued their lives to the celebration of another festival in commemoration of it. Then they read over the whole history of Haman from the beginning to the end, but not out of any printed book, (for that is not lawful), but out of an Hebrew manuscript written on parchment. There are five places in the text, wherein the reader raises his voice with all his might: When he comes to the place that mentions the names of the ten sons of Haman, he repeats them very quick, to shew that they were all destroyed in a moment; and every time that the name of Haman is pronounced, the children with great fury strike against the benches of the synagogues with the mallets that they bring for that purpose. After that the reading is finished, they return home and have a supper, not of flesh, but of spoon-meat; and early next morning

they arise, and return to the synagogue; where, after they have read that passage in Exodus which makes mention of the war of Amalek, they begin again to read the book of Esther with the same ceremonies as before; and so conclude the service of the day with curses against Haman and his wife Zeresh, with blessings upon Mordecai and Esther, and with praises to God for having preserved his people. Their resting on this day is observed so religiously, that they will not so much as set or sow any thing in their gardens, with full persuasion that it would not come up if they did; and therefore they either play at chess, and such like games, or spend the time in music and dancing, until it be proper to begin their feasting, wherein they indulge themselves to such an immoderate degree, that their feast of Purim has, with great justice, been called the bacchanals of the Jews. They allow themselves to drink wine to excess, nay, even to such a pitch, as not to be able to distinguish between the blessing of Mordecai and the curse of Haman, as themselves speak; and amidst the other sports and diversions of the day, they used formerly to erect a gibbet, and burn upon it a man made of straw, whom they called Haman; but herein it was thought, that they might have a design to insult Christians upon the death of our crucified Saviour, and therefore Theodosius the II. (Anno Dom. 408.) forbade them to use this ceremony under the penalty of forfeiting all their privileges. We have only farther to remark concerning this festival, that it is always kept for two days together; and the reason hereof is this:—The Jews at Shushan had two days allowed them to revenge themselves of their enemies, Esther ix. 13. but the rest of the Jews in other nations had but one. This caused at first some difference in their time of feasting; for the Jews, in all other parts of the kingdom, having done execution on their enemies on the thirteenth day, kept their rejoicing feast on the fourteenth; but the Jews at Shushan, being engaged in this work both on the thirteenth and fourteenth days, kept their festival for their deliverance on the fifteenth. When Mordecai however had made a record of this great deliverance, he sent letters to all the Jews throughout the dominions of Ahasuerus, to establish it as a standing ordinance among them, that they should keep both the fourteenth and fifteenth of the month Adar every year, as the days whereon the Jews rested from their enemies: And this is the reason why the festival continues for two days, though the former of them is only kept with great solemnity. *Patrick's Commentary*, *Howel's History* in the Notes, and *Cabmet's Dictionary* under the word *Purim*.

†² Both the Septuagint, Vulgate, and our transla-

ledge of the Scriptures, who had hitherto continued in Babylon, with others of the captivity that had not yet returned, obtained leave of the king to go to Jerusalem, and to take as many of his own nation with him as were willing to accompany him thither.

From Ezra iv.
7 to the end ;
all Esth. Neh.
and part of
Hagg. Zech.
and Malachi.

On the first day of the first month (which is called Nisan, and might fall about the middle of our March) he set forward on his journey from Babylon, † with an ample commission and authority to restore and settle the state, reform the church of the Jews, and regulate and govern both according to their own laws. When he came to the river Ahava, †² he there halted until the rest of his company was come up ; and then having, in a solemn fast, †³ recommended himself and all that were with him to the Divine protection, on the twelfth day he set forward for Jerusalem, where they all safely arrived on the first day of the fifth month, called Ab, i. e. about the middle of our July, having spent four whole months in their journey from Babylon thither.

Upon his arrival, Ezra delivered up to the temple the offerings which had been made to it by the king, his nobles, and the rest of the people of Israel that staid behind, which †⁴ amounted to a very large sum ; and having communicated his commission to the

tion, render the words *Sopher Mahir, a ready scribe*, Ezra vii. 6. as if to have a quick hand at writing out the law were any great perfection, or that any aged man (as Ezra was) should be renowned for it. It was not then for writing, but for explaining the things contained in the Scriptures, that Ezra was so famous. For as *Sepher* signifies a *book*, so *Sopher* denotes "one skilled and learned in that book ;" and as there was no book comparable to the book of the law, therefore *Sepher* became a name of great dignity, and signified one that taught God's law, and instructed the people out of it ; in which sense we find the word *γραμματιστής*, or *scribes*, used in the New Testament. For when our Saviour is said to have taught the people, "as one having authority and not as the scribes," this plainly shews, that these scribes were not transcribers, but teachers and expounders of the law, though they did not do it with a proper authority. *Patrick's* and *Le Clerc's* Commentaries.

† It can hardly be imagined, but that some more than ordinary means were used to obtain so great a favour from the king as this commission was ; and therefore we may suppose, that it was granted at the solicitation of Esther, who was become the best beloved of the king's concubines, though not as yet advanced to the dignity of queen. For seeing it was usual for the kings of Persia, on some particular days and occasions, to allow their women to ask what boons they pleased ; it is not unlikely that, by the direction of Mordecai, upon some such time and occasion as this, Esther (though she had not discovered her kindred and nation) might make this the matter of her request. *Prideaux's* Connection, Anno 459.

†² This was a river of Assyria, and very probably that which ran along the Adiabene, where the river Diava, or Adiava, is known to be, and upon which Ptolemy places the city of Abane, or Aavane. Here, some imagine, was the country which in the second book of Kings, xvii. 24. is called Ava, from whence the king of Assyria translated the people called Avites into Palestine, and in their room settled some of the captive Israelites. It was a common thing for

those that travelled from Babylon to Jerusalem, in order to avoid the scorching heat of the desert of Arabia, to shape their course northward at first, and then, turning to westward, to pass through Syria into Palestine. But Ezra had a farther reason for his taking this rout ; for as he intended to get together as many Israelites as he could, to carry along with him to Jerusalem, he took his course this way, and made an halt in the country of Ava, or Ahava, from whence he might send emissaries into the Caspian mountains, to invite such Jews as were there to come and join him. *Le Clerc's* Commentary on Ezra viii. and *Calmet's* Dictionary under the word *Ahava*.

†³ This they had the greater reason to do, because they carried things of considerable value along with them, were apprehensive of enemies that lay in wait for them, and were ashamed to ask any guard of the king, who, being not much instructed in Divine matters, might possibly think that what they said of God's favour towards them, and the prophecies concerning their restoration, were but vain boasts, in case they should seem to distrust his power and favour (of whom they had spoken so magnificently), by making application to the king for his protection and defence. Rather therefore than give any such umbrage, they were resolved to commit themselves entirely to God : But then it was necessary that they should beseech that of him, which, without giving offence, they could not request of the king. *Patrick's* Commentary.

†⁴ According to the account we have of them (Ezra viii. 26, 27.), there were six hundred and fifty talents of silver, which, at three hundred seventy-five pounds to the talent, make two hundred forty-three thousand seven hundred and fifty pounds. The silver vessels weighed an hundred talents, which came to thirty-seven thousand and five hundred pounds. The gold in coin was an hundred talents, which, at four thousand five hundred pounds per talent, made four hundred and fifty thousand pounds : And besides all this, there were twenty basons of gold of a thousand drachms, and two vessels of fine copper as valuable as gold. *Howell's* History in the Notes.

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king's lieutenants and governors throughout all Syria and Palestine, he betook himself to the executing of the contents of it.

He had not been long in his government before he found that many of the people had taken wives of other nations, contrary to the law of God; and that several of the priests and Levites, as well as other chief men of Judah and Benjamin, had transgressed in this particular. And therefore after he had, in * mourning, and fasting, and † prayer, deprecated God's wrath for so sad an apostacy, he caused proclamation to be made for all the people of the land, that had returned from the captivity, to meet together at Jerusalem, under the penalty of excommunication and confiscation of their goods; and when they met, he endeavoured to make them sensible of their sin, and engaged them, in a promise and covenant before God, to depart from it, by putting away their strange wives, and the children that were born of them, that the seed of Israel might not be polluted by such an undue commixture: And, accordingly, commissioners were appointed to inspect this affair, who, in three months time, made a proper inquiry, and a thorough reformation of this enormity.

Upon the death of Zerubbabel, the administration both of civil and ecclesiastical affairs devolved upon Ezra; but in the twentieth year of Ahasuerus, †² Nehemiah, a very religious and excellent person among those of the captivity, and who was a great favourite with that prince, succeeded him in the government of Judah and Jerusalem. He had informed himself from some people that were come from Jerusalem, of the miserable state and condition of that city; that †³ its walls were broken down, and its

* The manner in which Ezra is said to have expressed his concern for the people's unlawful marriages, is, by "rending his garment and his mantle," chap. ix. 3. i. e. both his inner and upper garment; which was a token, not only of great grief and sorrow, but of his apprehensions likewise of the Divine displeasure; and by "pulling off the hair of his head and beard, which was still an higher sign of exceeding great grief among other nations as well as the Jews; and therefore we find in Homer, that when Ulysses and his companions bewailed the death of Elpenor,

Ἐξόρμενοι δ' ἐνταῦθα γόων, τίλλοντο τε χαίτας.

Odyss. x.

† The prayer we have in Ezra ix. 6, &c. the purport of which is this:—"That he was confounded when he thought of the greatness of their sins, which were ready to overwhelm them, and of the boldness and insolence of them beyond measure, even though they had seen the Divine vengeance upon their forefathers in so terrible a manner, that they had not yet worn off the marks of his displeasure. He had begun indeed to shew favour to some of them; but this so much the more aggravated their wickedness, in that, so soon after their restoration, and settlement in their native country, they had returned to their old provocations, notwithstanding the many admonitions in the law and the prophets, to have nothing to do with the people of Canaan, except it were to expel, and rout them out. What then can we expect, says he, but the utter destruction of the small remnant that is left of us, if, after all the punishments which God has inflicted on us, and his beginning now to be gracious unto us, we relapse into the same offences

for which we have so severely suffered? For, while we remain monuments of his mercy, and yet appear before him in our abominations, we must be dumb, and have nothing to plead in excuse of our detestable ingratitude." *Patrick's Commentary.*

†² It may well be questioned, whether this Nehemiah be the same that is mentioned in Ezra, (ch. ii. 2. and Neh. vii. 7.) as one that returned from the Babylonish captivity under Zerubbabel; since, from the first year of Cyrus to the twentieth of Artaxerxes Longimanus, there are no less than ninety-two years intervening; so that Nehemiah must at this time have been a very old man; upon the lowest computation above an hundred, and consequently utterly incapable of being the king's cup-bearer, of taking a journey from Shushan to Jerusalem, and of behaving there with all that courage and activity that is recorded of him. Upon this presumption therefore, we may conclude, that this was a different person, though of the same name; and that Tarshatha (the other name by which he is called, Ezra ii. 63. and Neh. vii. 65.) denotes the title of his office, and both in the Persian and Chaldean tongues was the general name given to all the king's deputies and governors. *Le Clerc's* and *Pool's* Annotations on Neh. i. [But if the chronology of Dr Hales be adopted, the difficulty, which leads to this conclusion, will be at once removed. See Note * p. 492 of this vol.]

†³ The commissions, which had hitherto been granted the Jews, were supposed to extend no farther than to the rebuilding of the temple, and their own private houses; and therefore the walls and gates of their city lay in the same ruinous condition, in which the Chaldeans left them after that devastation. *Patrick's Commentary*, and *Pool's* Annotations.

gates burnt, so that its inhabitants lay open, not only to the incursions and insults of their enemies, but to the reproach likewise and contempt of their neighbours. This mournful relation affected the good man to such a degree, that he applied himself in fasting and (a) prayer to God, and humbly besought, that he would be pleased to favour the design which he had conceived of asking the king's permission to go to Jerusalem.

From Ezra iv. 7. to the end; all Esth. Neh. and part of Hagg. Zech. and Malachi.

By his office, he † was cup-bearer to the king; and therefore, when it came to his †² turn to wait, the king, observing that his countenance was not so cheerful as at other times, and being told, that the distressed state of his country, and of the city where his ancestors were buried, were the only cause of it, gave him, at his request, through the intercession of the queen (who (b) was then sitting with him), leave to go to Jerusalem, and a full commission (as his governor of the province of Judea), to repair the walls, and to set up the gates, and fortify the city again in the same manner that it was before it was dismantled and destroyed by the Babylonians; but upon this condition it was, that he should return to court again at such a †⁵ determined time.

The king, at the same time, wrote letters to all the governors beyond the Euphrates, to be aiding and assisting to him in the work. He sent his order to Asaph, the keeper of his forests in those parts, to furnish him with whatever timber he should want, not only for the reparation of the towers and gates of the city, but for the building of himself an house likewise, as governor of the province, to live in; and, to do him still more honour, he sent a guard of horse, under the command of some of the captains of his army, to conduct him safe to his government.,

With these letters and powers Nehemiah arrived at Jerusalem, and was kindly received by the people; but it was three days before he acquainted any one with the occasion of his coming. On the third day at night, he, with some few attendants, went privately round the city, to take a view of the walls, which he found in a ruinous condition; and on the next, called together the chief of the people, and, * having reminded

(a) Neh. i. 5.

† This was a place of great honour and advantage in the Persian court, because of the privilege which it gave him, that was in it, of being daily in the king's presence, and the opportunity which he had thereby of gaining his favour, for the obtaining of any petition that he should make to him. And that it was a place of great advantage, seems evident by Nehemiah's gaining those immense riches which enabled him for so many years, (Neh. v. 14, 19.) out of his own private purse only, to live in his government, with all that splendour and expence (that will hereafter be related) without burdening the people at all for it. *Prideaux's Connection*, Anno 445.

†² Commentators have generally observed, that it was almost four months between his hearing of the disconsolate condition wherein Jerusalem lay, and his requesting leave of the king to go thither. But (besides that it might not come to his own turn of waiting sooner) there might be these farther reasons assigned for this his long silence and delay: As that he could not take so long and dangerous a journey in the winter; that he could no sooner meet with a seasonable opportunity of speaking with the king upon so critical an affair; or (as others will have it) that he retired all this intermediate while, and spent it in fasting and prayer. *Pool's Annotations*, and *Patrick's Commentary*.

(b) Neh. ii. 6.

†³ How long this was it is not certain. It is said

indeed, that he was governor in the land of Judah for twelve years, chap. v. 14.—xiii. 6. But considering what haste he made in dispatching the building of the walls, which he finished in two and fifty days, the leave which he asked might be but for a year, or perhaps half so much; after which time it is likely that he returned to Shushan according to his promise; but some time after was sent back again by the king, (who found his presence there serviceable, or perhaps necessary, for the better regulation of that province), to be his governor for twelve years. *Patrick's Commentary*.

* The speech which Josephus puts in the mouth of the governor upon this occasion, is to this effect.—“ You cannot but see and understand, you men of Judea, that we ourselves are, at this day, under the power and Providence of the same Almighty and merciful God that did so many things for our forefathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, out of a gracious regard to their piety and justice: And it is by the favour of that God, that I have now obtained leave from the king to enter upon the rebuilding of your wall, and the putting of an end to the work of the temple that is yet unfinished. But taking this for granted, that you live among a sort of malicious and spiteful neighbours, who would do all that is to be done in nature for the crossing of your design, when they come once to see you heartily intent upon the undertaking, I shall therefore recommend it to you, in the first place, resolutely and fearlessly to cast yourselves upon God,

A. M. 3475, &c. or 4947. Ant Chris. 529, &c. or 464. them of the desolate manner in which the walls of their city lay, and exhorted them to set about the reparation of them, he produced his commission and letters to that purpose, which, when they were read, so gladdened and revived their drooping spirits, that they joyfully and unanimously cried out, "Let us rise and build."

In carrying on the building, Nehemiah divided the people into several companies, and assigned to each of them the quarter where they were to work, reserving to himself the reviewal and direction of the whole. But they had not long proceeded in the work, before Sanballat, an officer of the Moabites, and Tobiah, a man of note among the Ammonites, two bitter enemies to the Jewish nation, began to scoff and ridicule their undertaking. As the work however advanced, they changed their note, and apprehending themselves in danger from the growing greatness of the Jews, were resolved to put a stop to their future progress.

To this purpose they entered into a confederacy with some neighbouring nations, to come upon them by surprise, demolish their works, and put them all to the sword; but the governor having notice of this their design, and sending out scouts daily to observe their motions, placed a guard well armed to defend and encourage the workmen; and ordered that each workman should have his arms nigh at hand in case they were attacked; while himself went often in person among them, by his precept and example encouraging them to trust in the Lord, and in his speeches and exhortations, putting them frequently in mind, that it was for their wives, their brethren, and children, (in case they were compelled to it) that they fought: so that, by these means, they secured themselves against all the attempts and designs of their enemies until the work was brought to a conclusion.

Sanballat, and the rest of his confederates, perceiving that their plot was discovered, and not daring to attack Nehemiah by open force, had recourse to craft and stratagem. To this purpose, under pretence of ending the difference between them in an amicable manner, they sent to invite him to a conference in a certain village in the plain of Ono, which belonged to the tribe of Benjamin, intending there to do him a mischief; but Nehemiah very probably suspecting their wicked design, returned in answer to the four messages of the same import, which they successively sent, "That the work wherein he was engaged required his personal attendance, and therefore he could not come."

Sanballat, perceiving that Nehemiah was too cautious to be ensnared by a general invitation, sent by his servant a letter, wherein he informed him, that the current report was,—“That he was building the walls of Jerusalem only to make it a place of strength, to support his intended revolt; that to this purpose he had suborned false prophets to favour his design, and to encourage the people to choose him king; and that therefore, to stop the course of these rumours, (which in a short time would come to the king's ears) he advised him to come to him, that they might confer together, and take such resolutions as were convenient.” But Nehemiah, knowing his own innocence, easily saw through this shallow contrivance, and returned him for answer, that “all these accusations were false, and the inventions only of his own naughty heart;” so that finding himself disappointed here likewise, he betook himself to this last expedient:

There was one Shemaiah, the son of Delaiah the priest, a great friend to Nehemiah, whom Sanballat had bribed to his interest. This man pretended to the gift of prophecy: and therefore, when Nehemiah came to his house one day, he foretold, that his enemies would make an attempt to murder him that very night, and therefore advised him to go with him † into the inner part of the temple, and so secure them-

who will most certainly defeat all the practices of your enemies; and, in the next place, to ply your business day and night, without any intermission either of care or of labour, this being the proper season for it.” *Jewish Antiq.* lib. xi. c. 5.

† By the house of God within the temple (as it is in the text, Neh. vi. 10.), Shemaiah certainly meant the sanctuary; and to advise Nehemiah to retreat thither, he had a good pretence, because it was both a strong and a sacred place, being defended by a

selves by shutting the doors. But though Nehemiah did not apprehend the other's design, (which he came to find out afterwards) yet, out of a sense of honour and religion, he declared positively, "That, come what would †, he would not quit his station, because it would badly become a man in his character to seek out for refuge when he saw danger approaching."

From Ezra iv.
7. to the end.
all Esth. Neh.
and part of
Hagg. Zech.
and Malachi.

These, and many more difficulties, the good governor had to contend with ; but, by God's assistance, he overcame them all, and in the space of two and fifty days, having completed the whole work, he afterwards held †² a dedication of the walls and gates of Jerusalem, with such solemnity and magnificence as a work of that nature required.

To this purpose he separated the priests, the Levites, and the princes of the people, into two companies, one of which walked to the right hand, and the other to the left, on the top of the walls. The two companies which were to meet at the temple, in their procession were attended with music, both vocal and instrumental. When they came to the temple, they there read the law, offered sacrifices, and made great rejoicings ; and as the feast of tabernacles happened at the same time, they failed not to celebrate it with great solemnity.

When the walls were finished, Nehemiah, to prevent any treachery from his enemies either within or without the city, †³ gave the charge of the gates to his brother Hanani, and to Hananiah, marshal of his palace †⁴, two men in whom he could confide ; commanding them not to suffer the gates to be opened till some time after sun rising, to see them safe barred at night, and to set the watch, which should consist of settled housekeepers, that were careful and diligent men : And for the still farther security of the

guard of Levites, and by its holiness privileged from all rude approaches. But his real design herein might be, not only to disgrace Nehemiah and dishearten the people, when they saw their governor's cowardice, but to prepare the way likewise for the enemies assailing and taking the city, when there was no leader to oppose them ; to give countenance to the calumny that had been spread abroad of his affecting to be made king, because he fled upon the report of it ; and perhaps, by the assistance of some other priests that were his confederates, either to destroy him or to secure his person, until the city was betrayed into the enemies hands. *Patrick's Commentary, and Pool's Annotations.*

† The words of Nehemiah upon this occasion are very significant, as well as magnanimous. "Should such a man as I flee ? I, the chief governor, upon whose presence and counsel and conduct the very life and being of the whole city and nation does, in a great measure, depend : I, who have professed such resolution, courage, and confidence in God ; I, who have had such eminent experience of God's gracious and powerful assistances, of his calling me to this employment, and carrying me through it, when the danger was greater than now ; shall I dishonour God and religion, and betray the people and city of God by my cowardice ? God forbid."

†² Dedication is a religious ceremony, whereby any temple, altar, and vessel thereunto belonging, is, by the pronunciation of a certain form of blessing, consecrated to the service of God ; and this dedication, we may observe, extends not only to things sacred, but to cities and their walls, and sometimes to private houses, Deut. xx. 5. As, therefore, Moses in the wilderness dedicated the tabernacle, and Solomon the temple, when he had finished it ; so Nehemiah, ha-

ving put things in good order, built the walls and set up the gates, thought proper to dedicate the city, as a place which God himself had chosen, and sanctified by his temple and gracious presence ; and by this dedication, to restore it to him again, after it had been laid waste, and profaned by the devastation of the heathens. *Patrick's Commentary, and Pool's Annotations.*

†³ Nehemiah, very likely, was now returning to Shushan to give the king an account of the state of affairs in Judea ; and therefore he took care to place such men in the city as he knew would faithfully secure it in his absence. Hanani is said to be his brother ; but he chose his officers, not out of partial views to his own kindred, but because he knew that they would acquit themselves in their employment with a strict fidelity. Hanani had given proof of his zeal for God and his country in his taking a tedious journey from Jerusalem to Shushan, to inform Nehemiah of the sad estate of Jerusalem, and to implore his helping hand to relieve it, chap. i. And the reason why Nehemiah put such trust and confidence in Hananiah, was, because he was a man of conscience, and acted upon religious principles, which would keep him from those temptations to perfidiousness which he might probably meet with in his absence, and against which a man, destitute of the fear of God, has no sufficient fence. *Patrick's Commentary, and Pool's Annotations.*

†⁴ So the house which was built for Nehemiah's residence might justly be called, because he lived there in great splendor, though wholly at his own charge, and as the king's viceroy, there gave audience to the people, as a king is wont in his palace, *Patrick's Commentary, and Pool's Annotations.*

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&c. or 4947.
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or 464.

city, observing that the † number of its inhabitants was too few, he ordered that the principal men of the nation should there fix their habitations, and at the same time caused the rest to †² cast lots, whereby a tenth part of the whole people of Judah and Benjamin †³ became obliged to dwell at Jerusalem, though those who came voluntarily were better received.

While the walls of the city were building, there happened a kind of mutiny among the common people, which might have been of fatal consequence had it not been timely composed : For the rich taking the advantage of the meaner sort, had †⁴ exacted heavy usury of them, insomuch, that they made them pay the centesima for all the money that was lent them, i. e. one per cent. for every month, which amounted to twelve per cent. for the whole year. This oppression reduced them so low, that they were forced to mortgage their lands, houses, and tenements, and even to sell their children into servitude, to have †⁵ wherewith to buy bread for the support of themselves and their families ; which being a manifest breach of the law of God, (for (a) that forbids all the race of Israel to take usury of any of their brethren) Nehemiah, as soon as he was informed thereof, resolved to remove so great an iniquity. And, accordingly, having called a general assembly of the people, wherein he set before them the nature of the offence, how great a breach it was of the Divine law, and how heavy an oppression upon their brethren ; what handle it might give their enemies to reproach them ; and how much it might provoke the wrath of God against them all ; he caused it to be enacted by the general suffrage of the whole assembly, that every one should return to his brother what-

† One reason why the bulk of the Jews (who were originally pastors and lovers of agriculture) might rather chuse to live in the country than at Jerusalem, was, because it was more suited to their genius and manner of life : But at this time their enemies were so enraged to see the walls built again, and so restless in their designs to keep the city from rising to its former splendor, that it terrified many from coming to dwell there, thinking themselves more safe in the country, where their enemies had no pretence to disturb them. *Le Clerc's* and *Patrick's* Commentaries.

†² Though the casting of lots be certainly forbidden, where the thing is done out of a spirit of superstition, or with a design to tempt God ; yet, on some occasions, it is enjoined by God himself ; and the most holy persons both in the Old and New Testament, in particular cases, have practised it. The wise man acknowledges the usefulness of this custom, when he tells us, " that the lot causeth contention to cease, and parteth between the mighty," Prov. xviii. 18. ; and therefore it was no bad policy (as things now stood) to take this method of decision, since the lot (which all allowed was under the Divine direction) falling upon such a person, rather than another, would be a great means, no doubt, to make him remove more contentedly to the city. *Patrick's* Commentary, and *Calmet's* Dictionary under the word *Lot*.

†³ These were the two tribes that anciently possessed Jerusalem, which stood partly in one tribe, and partly in the other ; for which reason, in some places of Scripture, Jerusalem is reckoned as belonging to the children of Judah, Josh. xv. 63. and Judg. xviii. and in others to the children of Benjamin, Judg. xxi. 28. but what part of the city belonged to the one, and what to the other, is not so well agreed among learned men. Since these two tribes, however, were

the ancient inhabitants of the city, there was all the reason in the world why, in this scarcity of inmates, they, above any others, should be obliged to come and dwell there. *Patrick's* Commentary.

†⁴ This usury was the more grievous, because it was not only contrary to their law, and demanded at a time when they were hard at work, and their enemies threatening to destroy them all ; but (as some have observed) that the twentieth of Ahasuerus (wherein this was done) began about the end of a sabbatical year, after the law, which forbade every creature to exact any debt of his neighbour or his brother, Deut. xv. 2. had been so frequently read. This raised the cry of the poor to a greater height, having been forced to sell their children, and deprived now of all power of redeeming them, because their lands were mortgaged to these oppressors. *Patrick's* Commentary.

†⁵ Not long before this, there had been a great scarcity for want of rain, which God thought proper to withhold, in punishment for the people's taking more care to build their own houses than his, as we read, Hag. i. 9. &c. In which time the rich had no compassion on their poor brethren, but forced them to part with all they had for bread ; and now (what made them still more miserable) another dearth was come upon them, which might easily happen, from the multitude of people that were employed in the repair of the walls ; from the building-work, which hindered them from providing for their families some other way ; and from the daily dread they had of their enemies, which might keep them from going abroad to fetch in provision, and the country people from bringing it in. *Patrick's* Commentary, and *Pool's* Annotations.

(a) Exod. xxii. 25.

ever he had exacted of him upon usury, and should likewise release all the lands, houses, and tenements, that he had[†] at any time taken of him upon mortgage; which act presently removed all uneasiness, and pacified the minds of the people.

The governor himself indeed was so far from countenancing any manner of oppression, that he did not exact the daily revenue of forty shekels of silver, and the constant furniture of his table with provisions; but remitted these and all other advantages of his place, that might any way be troublesome and chargeable to the people. Nay, he not only refused the allowance which was due to him as governor, but at his own charge[†], kept open house, entertaining every day at his table an hundred and fifty of the Jews and their rulers, besides strangers; for which he constantly allowed an ox, six fat sheep, and fowl in proportion, and on every tenth day wine of all sorts. Besides this, he gave (a) many rich presents to the temple, and by his generous example encouraged others, both princes and people, to do the like.

Thus Nehemiah, with great honour and applause, having executed the commission with which he was sent to Jerusalem, at the expiration of the time which was allowed him, returned to Shushan according to his promise to the king. But before he did that, ^{†2} Ezra, the learned scribe, at the request of the people, produced the book of the law which he had now completed, and having divided the company into several parts, he (with thirteen priests more) read from a wooden pulpit, ^{†5} and as he went along expounded it to them. This they all listened to with a very devout attention, [‡] and celebrated the ensuing feast of tabernacles with great gladness of heart; and, on a day appointed for a solemn fast, confessing their own sins, and deprecating the judgments due to the iniquity of their fathers; acknowledging the Omnipotence of God in creating and preserving all things, and enumerating his gracious mercies in their sundry deliverances from their enemies and persecutors, they made a covenant with him, that they would walk in this law, which was given by Moses; and (to oblige themselves to a more ^{†4} strict performance of this covenant) it was ordered to be engrossed, that the princes,

From Ezra iv.
7. to the end;
all Esth. Neh.
and part of
Hagg. Zech.
and Malachi.

[†] From this great and daily expence, it seems most probable, either that Nehemiah had large remittances from the Persian court (even besides his own estate) to answer it; or that he did not continue at Jerusalem for the whole twelve years together; or that if he did, he did not continue this expensive way of house-keeping all the time, but only during the great and present exigencies and distresses of the Jews, which ceased in a good measure after that the walls were built, the act against usury passed, and the people discharged to their ordinary course of maintaining themselves and families. *Pool's Annotations, and Le Clerc's Commentary.*

(a) Neh. vii. 70, &c.

^{†2} This Ezra, without all controversy, was the same Ezra who came from Babylon in the seventh of Artaxerxes, with a full commission to Jerusalem, to assist Zerubbabel in the reformation of the whole state of the Jewish church. After the death of Zerubbabel, the whole administration devolved upon him; but as his commission lasted but for twelve years, upon its expiration Nehemiah succeeded to the government, and we hear no more of Ezra until he is here called upon to read and expound the law to the people; whether, as some think, he returned to Babylon to give the people an account of affairs in the province of Judea, or whether, in this intermediate time, he employed himself (in some retirement) in the great work of preparing a new and current edition of the

Holy Scriptures, of which we shall give a full account in our next dissertation. *Patrick's Commentary, and Pool's Annotations.*

^{†3} This pulpit was to raise him up higher than the people, the better to be seen and heard by them; but we are not to think that it was made in the fashion of ours, which will hold no more than one person; for (as we may observe by the very next words) it was made large and long enough to contain fourteen people at once. *Patrick's Commentary on Nehemiah viii. 4.*

[‡] The words in the text are, "Since the days of Joshua, the son of Nun, unto that day had not the children of Israel done so, and there was very great gladness," Neh. viii. 17. But it can hardly be thought that this festival had never been observed since Joshua's time, because we read in the foregoing book of Ezra, that it was kept at their return from Babylon; but the meaning is, that the joy since that time had never been so great as it was upon this occasion; for which the Jews themselves assign this reason, viz. That in the days of Joshua they rejoiced, because they had got possession of the land of Canaan; and now they equally rejoiced, because they were restored and quietly settled in it, after they had been long cast out of it. *Patrick's Commentary.*

^{†4} The observances, which they chiefly obliged themselves to in this covenant were, 1st, Not to make inter-marriages with the Gentiles. 2dly, To observe

A. M. 3475,
&c or 4917.
Ant. Chris.
529, &c.
or 464.

priests, and Levites might set their † hands and seals to it; and those who did not set their seals, of what age, sex, or condition soever, did bind themselves with an oath punctually to observe it.

But, notwithstanding all this precaution, Nehemiah had not been long gone from Jerusalem, before the people relapsed into their old corruptions; which, in a great measure, was owing to the mismanagement of †² Eliashib the high priest, who, being by marriage allied to Tobiah, the Jews great enemy, had allowed him an apartment in the temple, in the very place where the offerings, and other things appertaining to the priests and Levites used to be repositied. So that when Nehemiah returned from the Persian court, with a new commission for the reforming of all abuse, both in church and state, he was not a little surprised to find such a gross profanation of the temple, and that chambers should be provided in the house of God for one who was a declared enemy to his worship.

He therefore resolved to put an end to this; but found himself under a necessity of proceeding with caution in the affair, because †³ Tobiah had insinuated himself into the good opinion of most of the people, and especially those of note. The first step therefore that he took towards this reformation, was to convince them of their error, by causing the book of the law to be read publicly, and in the hearing of all the people; so that when the reader came to that place in Deuteronomy, wherein it is commanded, that (a) an “Ammonite or Moabite †⁴ should not come into the congregation of God, even to the tenth

the Sabbaths and Sabbatical years. 3dly, To pay their annual tribute for the reparation and service of the temple. And, 4thly, To pay their tithes and first-fruits for the maintenance of the priests and Levites: From which particulars, thus named in this covenant, we may learn what were the laws of God, which hitherto they had been most neglective of since their return from the captivity. *Prideaux's Connection*, anno 444.

† It signified little indeed what such untoward people promised; for what regard would they have to their own hand-writing, who regarded not the ten commandments, written on tables of stone by the finger of God? It was very useful, however, that there should be a public instrument to convince them of their impiety, and that they might be publicly confounded when they proved perfidious deserters, by shewing them, under their own hands, their engagements to future fidelity. *Patrick's Commentary*.

†² Some are apt to imagine, that this Eliashib was no more than a common priest, because he is said to have had “the oversight of the chambers of the house of God,” Neh. xiii. 4. which was an office too mean (as they think) for the high priest. But we cannot see why the oversight of the chambers of the house of God may not import the whole government of the temple, which certainly belonged to the high priest only; nor can we conceive how any one that was less than absolute governor of the whole temple could make so great an innovation in it. He was assistant indeed in the reparation of the walls of the city; but excepting this one act, where do we read of his doing any thing worthy of memory, towards the reforming of what was amiss either in church or state, in the times either of Ezra or Nehemiah? And yet we cannot but presume, that had he joined with them in so good a work, some mention would have been made of it in the books written by them. Since therefore, in-

stead of this, we find it recorded in Ezra, (chap. x. 18.) that the pontifical house was, in his time, grown very corrupt, and, not improbably, by his connivance began to marry into heathen families, (Neh. xiii. 28.) it seems most likely, that it was Eliashib the high priest who was the author of this great profanation of the house of God; but as he might die before Nehemiah returned from Babylon, for this reason, we hear nothing of the governor's reprehending him for it. *Prideaux's Connection*, anno 428.

†³ By his making two alliances with families of great note among the Jews; for Johanan his son had married the daughter of Meshullam the son of Berechiah, (Neh. vi. 18., iii. 4.) who was one of the chief managers of the building of the walls of Jerusalem, under the direction of the governor; and he himself had married the daughter of Shecaniah the son of Arah, another greater man among the Jews; by which means he had formed an interest, and was looked upon as a worthy man, though (being an Ammonite) he could not but bear a national hatred to all that were of the race of Israel. *Prideaux's Connection*, anno 428.

(a) Deut. xxiii. 3.

†⁴ They who, by the congregation of God, in this place, do understand the public assemblies for Divine worship, lie under a great mistake; for no man of any nation was forbidden to come and pray unto God in the temple. Men of all nations indeed, that were willing to become proselytes, were admitted into the Jewish communion; and, if they submitted to be circumcised, were allowed to eat the passover, and to enjoy all the privileges that true Israelites did, except only in the case of marriage; and therefore this phrase of not entering into the congregation of the Lord, must be understood to mean no more than a prohibition of marriage; for this (according to their Rabbins) was the case of such prohibitions. None of the

generation for ever;" they being sensible of their transgression in this respect, separated themselves immediately from the mixed multitude, which gave Nehemiah an easy opportunity of getting rid of Tobiah, who was an Ammonite; and therefore he ordered the people, while they were in this good disposition, to cast his furniture out of the sacred chambers, and † to have them cleansed again, and restored to their former use.

From Ezra iv,
7. to the end;
all Est. Neh.
and part of
Hagg. Zech.
and Malachi.

Among other corruptions that grew up during the governor's absence, there was one, of which (as he was a constant frequenter of the public worship) he could not but take notice, and that was the neglect of carrying on the daily service of the house of God in a proper and decent manner. For the tithes, which were to maintain the ministers of the temple in their offices and stations, being either embezzled by the high priest, or withheld by the laity, for want of them the Levites and singers were driven from the temple into the country, to find a subsistence some other way: And therefore, to remedy this abuse, he forthwith ordered the people to bring in their tithes of corn, wine, and oil, into the treasury of the temple; and having appointed proper officers to receive and distribute them, he recalled the absent ministers, and restored every thing to its former order.

The neglect of the service of God had introduced a profanation of the Sabbath; for, during Nehemiah's absence, the Jews had not only done all manner of servile works on that day, but had permitted strangers, Tyrians, and others, to come and sell their fish and other commodities publicly in the streets of Jerusalem. Against these wicked and irregular practices, Nehemiah remonstrated to the chief men of the city with some warmth; and to let them see that he was resolved to make a thorough reformation in this matter, he gave a strict order, that, towards the evening before their Sabbath began, the city gates should be shut, and not opened until the Sabbath was over: and to have this order more duly executed, he appointed †² some of his own servants for the present to guard the gates, that no burden might pass through on the Sabbath-day. So that when the merchants and other dealers came, and finding the gates shut against them, took up their lodgings without the walls in hopes of selling to the country people, (though they could not to the citizens) the next day he threatened to take them into custody if they did not go about their business; and to this purpose appointed a guard of Levites †³ to take up their station at the gate, and to stop all comers in that might any way profane the Sabbath.

house of Israel, of either sex, were to enter into marriage with any Gentiles, of what nation soever, unless they were first converted to their religion, and became entire proselytes to it; and even in that case, some were debarred from it for ever; others only in part; and others again only for a limited time. Of the first sort were all of the seven nations of the Canaanites, mentioned in Deut. vii. of the second sort were the Moabites and the Ammonites, whose males were excluded for ever, but not their females; and of the third sort were the Edomites and Egyptians, with whom the Jews might not marry until the third generation: But with all others who were not of these three excepted sorts, they might freely make inter-marriages whenever they became thorough proselytes to their religion. At present, however, because, through the confusions which have since happened in all nations, it is not to be known who is an Ammonite, who an Edomite, a Moabite, or an Egyptian, they hold this prohibition to have been long out of date, and that now, any Gentile, as soon as proselyted to their religion, may immediately be admitted to make inter-marriages with them. *Prideaux's Connection*, anno 428.

† The method of purifying any thing or person that was legally unclean, is thus described:—"For an unclean person, they shall take of the ashes of the burnt heifer of purification for sin, (i. e. of the heifer that was sacrificed on the great day of expiation) and running water shall be put thereto in a vessel," which being afterwards strained off and kept for this purpose, "a clean person, i. e. the priest, (for to him the work of purifying is appropriated, Lev. xiii.) shall sprinkle upon the unclean person;" and on the seventh day at even, after having bathed himself, and washed his clothes, he shall be deemed clean; but it is very likely, that things inanimate were immediately upon their being sprinkled with this water of separation as it is called (Numb. xix. 9.) reputed clean. *Patrick's Commentary*.

†² It seems as if matters were come to that pass, that he could not trust the common porters of the gates, and therefore appointed some of his own domestics, (who he knew would neither be careless nor corrupted) to see that the gates were kept shut, and all traffic prohibited. *Patrick's Commentary*.

†³ The reason why he appointed the Levites to this office of keeping the gates on the Sabbath day,

A. M. 3475,
&c. or 4947.
Ant. Chris.
529, &c.
or 464.

Another reformation, and the last indeed that we find recorded of Nehemiah, was his dissolution of unlawful marriages among the Jews. Their law strictly forbade them to make inter-marriages with any foreign nations, either by giving their daughters to them for wives, or by taking their daughters to themselves; but, since their return from captivity, people of all conditions had paid so little regard to this command, that even the pontifical house (which of all others ought to have set a better example) was become polluted with such impure mixtures; insomuch, that Joiada the high priest had a son who married the daughter of Sanballat the Horonite, who at that time, very probably, was governor of Samaria.

These mixed marriages (besides many other damages that accrued to the state) would in a short time (as he observed to them) quite corrupt their native language †, because he perceived that the children already began to smatter the speech of their foreign parent; and therefore he required them all, under the penalties ‡ (which he inflicted upon some that were obstinate) to put away their wives, and to have no more communion of that kind with any foreign nation: in which he proceeded with such impartiality, that when the son of Joiada refused to quit his wife, he ordered him immediately to depart the country †²; which accordingly he did, and with several others that were in the like circumstances went and settled under his father-in-law in Samaria.

These were some of the reformations which Nehemiah, as a wise and pious governor, made in the Jewish church and state. But after his death, it was not long before the

was, because he not only thought that, by virtue of their character, they would meet with more deference and respect than his domestic servants; but that, when he and his servants were gone from Jerusalem, he was resolved to have this watch continued, until this evil custom of admitting dealers into the city on the Sabbath day was quite broken. *Patrick's Commentary.*

† What the natural language of the Jews at this time was, whether the Hebrew or Chaldee, is matter of some enquiry among the learned. Those who suppose that it was Hebrew, produce the book of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther, besides the prophecies of Daniel, which, for the most part, were written in Hebrew, and which they suppose the authors of them would not have done, if Hebrew at that time had not been the vulgar language. But to this it is replied, that these Jewish authors might make use of the Hebrew language in what they wrote, not only because the things which they recorded concerned the Jewish nation only, among whom there were learned men enough to explain them; but chiefly because they were minded to conceal what they wrote from the Chaldeans, who at that time were their lords and masters, and, considering all circumstances, might not perhaps have been so well pleased with them, had they understood the contents of their writings. Since it appears then, say they, by several words occurring in the books of Maccabees, the New Testament, and Josephus, that the language which the Jews then spoke was Chaldee; that this language they learned in their captivity, and after their return from it, never assumed their ancient Hebrew tongue, so as to speak it vulgarly, it hence must follow, that what is here called the language of the Jews, and their native tongue, was at that time no other than the Chal-

dee, for the ancient Hebrew was only preserved among the learned. *Le Clerc's Commentary.*

‡ There are some things in the text which, as they are made to proceed from Nehemiah's own mouth, and appear in our translation, sound a little oddly:—"I contended with them, and cursed them, and smote certain of them, and plucked off their hair," chap. xiii. 25. But the sense of these words is no more than this:—"I contended with them," i. e. I expostulated the matter with them. "I cursed them," i. e. excommunicated them, in the doing of which I denounced God's judgments against them. "I smote certain of them," i. e. ordered the officers to beat some of the most notorious offenders, either with rods or with scourges, according to Deut. xxv. 2. "And I plucked off their hair, i. e. I commanded them to be shaved," thereby to put them to shame, and make them look like vile slaves: for, as the hair was esteemed a great ornament among Eastern nations, so baldness was accounted a great disgrace; and to inflict these several punishments upon them, Nehemiah had a sufficient provocation, because, in their marrying with heathen nations, they had acted contrary, not only to the express law of God, but to their own late solemn covenant and promise, Ezra x. 19. *Pool's Annotations.*

†² Josephus relates the matter as if this expulsion had been effected by the power of the great Sanhedrim: but whether the Sanhedrim was at this time in being or no, (as we have no clear footsteps of it until the time of Judas Maccabæus) there was no occasion for their interposing, since Nehemiah, no doubt, as governor of the province, had authority enough to banish him out of Judea, as Bertram, de Repub. Jud. c. xiii. expounds the phrase, "I chased him from me," Neh. xiii. 28.

people relapsed into the same enormities; for which reason we find Malachi †, the last prophet under the law, and who (not long after Haggai and Zechariah) must have lived in the time of Nehemiah, reproving the priests for their iniquity and scandalous lives; and upbraiding the people with their neglect of the worship of God; with their refusal to pay their tithes and offerings; with their divorcing their own wives, and marrying strange women; and with their inhumanity and cruel usage of their indigent brethren; the very same enormities which this good governor laboured to reform.

From Ezra iv.
7. to the end;
all Esth. Neh.
and part of
Hagg. Zech.
and Malachi.

How long after this Nehemiah lived at Jerusalem is uncertain: It is most likely however, that (notwithstanding all the revolutions * in the Persian court) he continued in his government to the time of his death, but when that happened, it is nowhere said; only we may observe, that at the time when he ends his book he could not be much less than seventy years old.

THE OBJECTION.

“**BUT** how good, and wise, and pious men soever the two governors of the Jewish church and nation, Ezra and Nehemiah, might be; yet it cannot but be thought an act of extreme severity, if not a violation of all justice and equity, for them to decree (as we find they both did) that, upon the dissolution of all illegal marriages, the poor children (who were entirely innocent as to their parents transgression) should be turned a-

† Whether the word Malachi be the proper name of a man, or only a generical name to denote an angel, a messenger, a prophet, or the like, has been a matter of some enquiry. From the prophet Haggai, chap. i. 13. and this other whom we cite under the name of Malachi, chap. iii. 1. it appears, that, in those times, the name of Malach-Jehovah, or the “messenger of the Lord,” was often given to prophets; and under this title the Septuagint have characterized, and the fathers of the Christian church have frequently quoted this prophetic writer. But the author of the lives of the prophets, under the name of Epiphanius Dorotheus, tells us, that this writer was of the tribe of Zebulun, a native of Sapha, and that the name of Malachi was given him because an angel used visibly to appear to the people after the prophet had spoken to them, to confirm what he had said; though most of the ancient Jews (as well as the Chaldee paraphrast) were of opinion, that Malachi was no other than Ezra under a borrowed name. However this be, it is agreed on all hands, that he was the last of the prophets of the synagogue, and lived about four hundred years, [according to Hales four hundred and twenty] before Christ; of whose coming, and the coming of his fore-runner John the Baptist, and of whose religion, and the institution of a Catholic and Universal church in the room of the Jewish, he speaks in very full and express terms, chap. iii. 1, &c. *Calmei's Dictionary*, under the word.

* Upon the death of Artaxerxes, (in Scripture called Ahasuerus) Xerxes, his only son by his queen,

(for he had several by his concubines, and among these the most famous were Sogdianus, Ochus, and Arsites) succeeded in the Persian throne; but, by the treachery of one of his eunuchs, Sogdianus came upon him while he was drunk, and after he had reigned no more than five and forty days, slew him, and seized on the kingdom. But his unjust possession did not hold long; for his brother Ochus, being then governor of Hyrcania, raised a considerable army, and having gained many of the nobility and governors of provinces to his interest, marched against him, and, under a pretence of a treaty, having got him into his power, threw him headlong into ashes: (a punishment used among the Persians for very enormous criminals) so that after he had reigned only six months and fifteen days, he died a very miserable death, and was succeeded by Ochus; who, as soon as he was settled in the kingdom, took the name of Darius, (and is therefore by historians called Darius Nothus) and after he had slain his brother Arsites, (who thought to have supplanted him as he had done Sogdianus, and Sogdianus, Xerxes) and suppressed several other insurrections against him, continued to sway the Persian sceptre for nineteen years; but whether he, or Nehemiah, his governor of Judea, died first, we have no certain account: all that we know is, that the last act of the governor's reformatations, viz. his dissolution of strange marriages, was in the fifteenth year of this prince's reign, and consequently but four before his death. *Prideaux's Connection*, anno 425.

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drift, and sent a-starving: As indeed the whole matter of these divorces seems to be abhorrent to the apostle's direction, (a) 'If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away.'

Nehemiah, no doubt, was a zealous reformer of the vices of his countrymen; but how these vices came to sprout up again so soon (as we find they did chap. xiii.) and in the short time of his absence from Jerusalem, which was but for (b) certain days, we cannot conceive. And though he was confessedly a man of a large and liberal spirit, yet the author of his history seems to have tarnished his character in this respect, when he makes him so lavish in his own praise, so ostentatious of his good works, and even in his very generosity discovering a mercenary temper, by his so frequently calling upon God (c) 'to think upon him for good, according to all that he had done for his people.' Nor has the author of the book of Ezra concerted his matters much better, when he makes an heathen prince (as Artaxerxes was) write in a style more becoming the Sanhedrim, and in the preamble to his commission, compliment him with the title of (d) 'the scribe of the law of the God of heaven,' as if that idolater had any knowledge of the God of heaven, or any perception that the Jews were the true worshippers of him.

The truth of the matter is, (e) these books of Ezra and Nehemiah were never written at the time of their pretended date, nor by the persons whose names they bear; but by some ignorant Sadducee or other, unacquainted with the affairs he pretended to treat of, and badly versed in points of chronology. For it is next to a thing incredible, that either Ezra or Nehemiah should be old enough to be acquainted with that Sanballat whose daughter Manassa (as he is called by Josephus) married, or that Sanballat himself should extend his life to the days of Alexander the Great, according to the same historian.

Nor is the authority of the book of Esther (f) clear of all suspicion, since in all Hebrew copies we find nothing of the six last chapters of it; no mention made of its contents in any exotic writer; and so many unaccountable absurdities everywhere occurring in it, that we cannot but look upon it as a spurious piece, that has in it the air of a romance, or a kind of tragi-comedy, rather than real history.

For (to begin with the very foundation of the whole story) how absurd is it to think that Mordecai should refuse to pay all manner of obeisance to Haman, who at that time was the king's great favourite and first minister of state; when to bow the knee, and even prostrate the whole body, in the salutation of their betters, was a common custom among the Hebrews as well as Persians? And how unreasonable is it to imagine that Ahasuerus should divorce his queen, merely because she was a modest woman, because she would not do a thing unbecoming her dignity, and contrary to the laws of the Persians*, (which allowed no woman of fashion to appear in public) merely to gratify the mad frolic of a drunken husband?

Say what we will, we can never apologise for Esther's turning concubine, though it were to the greatest prince in the universe, much less for her kinsman's abetting her unchastity, how much soever he might raise his fortune by it. And though it sounds a little strange that the king should forget to recompence a man, who had been so signal an instrument in preserving his life from a treasonable conspiracy, as Mordecai had

(a) 1 Cor. vii. 12.

(b) Neh. xiii. 6.

(c) Chap. v. 19.

(d) Ezra vii. 12.

(e) *Huetii*, Demonst. Propos. 4.

(f) *Ibid.*

* To this purpose Josephus (lib. xi. c. 6.) informs us, that the reason why Vashti refused to go to the king, when sitting in public company, was, because she thought herself bound by the laws of Persia, which would not allow wives to be seen by any besides their domestics: "For most barbarous nations (says Plu-

tarch in his Themistocles) are so very rigid and troublesome in their jealousy of their women, that they keep not only their wives, but their very maid-servants and concubines shut up at home, from seeing any but their own family; and when they travel they carry them in covered waggons, and lodge them under tents shut up and quite closed round." *Le Clerc's Commentary.*

been; yet, all on a sudden, (a) to confer such vast honours upon him, as would necessarily expose him to the envy and indignation of the whole Persian nobility, seems to be but an ill-judged method of rewarding him.

From Ezra iv.
7. to the end;
all Esth. Neh.
and part of
Hagg. Zech.
and Malachi.

How Mordecai's (b) being a Jew (when at that time the Jews had no interest at the Persian court, nay, when at that time a decree was issued out for their utter extirpation) could portend Haman's downfall, we cannot see; but a manifest thing it is, that when they grew into favour, (c) they became too bloody and outrageous to deserve the name of God's peculiar people; and that, how far soever Haman's resentment against Mordecai might carry him, yet for him to have (d) 'ten thousand talents of silver,' (which, upon the lowest computation, amount to almost three millions of our Sterling money) to lay down for his life and the lives of his countrymen, has as little credibility in it, as that the walls of Jerusalem (e) were built by Nehemiah (notwithstanding all the interruptions he met with) in two and fifty days."

THE Jewish law against marrying with heathens runs thus:—(f) "When the Lord thy God shall bring thee into the land whither thou goest to possess it, and hath cast out many nations before thee.—Thou shalt not make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take to thy son." And the reason of the law is assigned in the following verse: "For they will turn away thy sons from following me, that they may serve other gods:—For did not Solomon, (g) king of Israel (as Nehemiah argues with the people) sin by these things?" And if so great a one as he, who excelled all mankind in wisdom, was not safe from the seducement of these outlandish women, how shall ye be able to preserve yourselves from their enticements? And yet (as Moses goes on in his reasoning) (h) "Thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God; and the Lord hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself above all the people that are upon the face of the earth."

ANSWER.

Here then is an express law, enforced with weighty reasons, against these Pagan marriages: And therefore, since whatever is done contrary to the law is *ipso facto* null and void, these marriages with idolatrous women, which were strictly forbidden by God, were (properly speaking) no marriages at all; and the children which proceeded from them were in no better condition than those whom we call bastards. (i) No interposition of civil authority was therefore needful to dissolve these marriages. The infidelity of the party espoused was as much an interdiction as any of the most proximate degree of consanguinity, which, by the laws of all civilized nations, is known to vacate the marriage.

But even suppose that the civil authority thought proper to interpose in this matter, yet, wherein had the Jews any reason to complain, if, in just punishment for their wilful breach of a known and positive law, they were excluded from cohabiting with these illegal wives? The Jews, I say, especially, who for every light and trivial cause † made no scruple to give even their lawful wives a bill of divorcement, and might therefore, with much less difficulty, be supposed willing to repudiate those whom the laws of their God (for fear of their catching the infection of idolatry) had forbidden them to live with.

(a) *Le Clerc's Commentary* on Esther vi. 10.

(b) *Ibid.* on ver. 13.

(d) Chap. iii. 9.

(f) Deut. vii. 1. 3, 4.

(h) Deut. vii. 6.

(i) *Patrick's Commentary* on Ezra x. 3.

(c) Chap. ix. 5. 16.

(e) Neh. vi. 15.

(g) Neh. xiii. 26.

† The school of Shammah, who lived a little before our Saviour, taught, that a man could not lawfully be divorced from his wife, unless he had found

her guilty of some action which was really infamous and contrary to the rules of virtue. But the school of Hillel, who was Shammah's disciple, taught, on the contrary, that the least reasons (such as, if she did not dress his meat well, if she was not agreeable to him in person or temper, or if he found any other woman that he liked better) were sufficient to authorize a man to put away his wife. *Selden's Uxor Hebraica*, lib. iii. c. 18.

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St Paul indeed is not for "turning away an unbelieving wife," in case she is "willing to dwell with her husband;" but then he supposes, that this couple were married when they were both heathens, and in a state of infidelity, in which case there was no law, either divine or human, forbidding them to marry (whereas in these Jewish marriages with Pagans the prohibition is strict); and therefore, as there was no sin in their coming together at first, and the Christian religion (whether it was the man or the woman that embraced it) made no alteration in the case, his advice is, that they continue to dwell together, even though they be of different persuasions in matters of religion, because (as he farther adds this reason) (*a*) "the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife; and how knowest thou, O man," but that, by thy peaceable cohabitation with her, thou mayest convert and "save thy wife."

Though therefore the apostle is not for encouraging any separation between husband and wife upon account of their difference in religion, when their marriage was previous to either of their conversions to Christianity; yet, if we will make him consistent with himself, we must allow, that he is utterly averse to all mixed marriages with infidels, when in his following epistle he advises all Christians, (*b*) "not to be unequally yoked together with unbelievers; for what communion, says he, has light with darkness, or what concord has Christ with Belial?" &c. Whereby he gives us to think, that he esteemed all marriage with heathens illegal, and that, had the apostle at that time been either of Ezra's or Nehemiah's council, he would have given his vote for their dissolution among the Jews.

We own, indeed, that it is a very gracious declaration of God, "Behold all souls are mine, as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine; the soul that sinneth, it shall die." But then we are to consider, that as life signifies, in general, all that happiness which attends God's favour, so death denotes all those punishments which are the effects of Divine displeasure; and among these, the miseries of the next world are chiefly intended. These indeed shall be allotted to men according to their own demerits, without any regard to the faults of their forefathers, which shall neither be laid to their charge, nor made an aggravation of their guilt; but as to temporal evils and calamities, it cannot well otherwise be, but that, in the very course of things, children should suffer for the iniquities of their parents.

Though therefore it may seem a little hard, that the children should be included in their mother's divorce, yet the laws of most nations have determined this point:—That children are to follow the condition of their mothers, be it what it will, and, consequently, as they are unlawfully born, they must of course be alienated from the family, at the same time that the mother is repudiated, and in virtue of that very law which declares her marriage to be null. So that it was no arbitrary act in Ezra to abdicate the children as well as the mothers; though (*c*) to prevent the danger of their corrupting the other children of the family (if they were allowed to stay), and of insinuating themselves so far into their fathers affection's, as to prevail with them in time to recall their ejected wives, might be motive enough to a prudent ruler (considering the then situation of affairs) to put the law rigidly in execution. As this however was an act of the government, wherein Ezra and other good men who feared the Lord were concerned, we may reasonably presume, that some provision was made for the maintenance, and perhaps the education of these poor children, in the principles of the Jewish religion, at the public charge.

How long Nehemiah was in finishing the walls of Jerusalem, interpreters are not agreed, because some of them, supposing the space of two and fifty days, (*d*) mentioned in the Scripture, to be too short for the perfecting of the whole, have begun their computation from the time that Nehemiah returned his answer to Sanballat's first message,

(*a*) 1 Cor. vii. 16.

(*b*) 2 Cor. vi. 14.

(*c*) *Pool's* Annotations.

(*d*) Neh. vi. 15.

and others, from the time that the stone-wall was finished, and so allowing the whole fifty-two days for the perfecting of the rest. But if we look into the compass of time, from Nehemiah's being at Shushan to the day of the month when these walls are said to have been finished, we shall find, that no more than fifty-two days could well be allowed for the perfecting of the whole.

From Ezra iv.
7. to the end;
all Esth. Neh.
and part of
Hagg. Zech.
and Malachi.

It was (a) in the first month, called by the Jews Nisan, that Nehemiah was at Shushan, and obtained of the king leave to go to Jerusalem: And though we have no express account what time he spent in his journey, and when he came to Jerusalem; yet, if we may make a conjecture from the time that Ezra expended in the same journey, we can scarce suppose that he arrived at Jerusalem before the end of the fourth month. Ezra set out on the first day of the first month. He made a (b) short stay indeed at the river Ahava; but it was the first day of the fifth month before he reached Jerusalem. Nehemiah could not possibly set out so soon in the year, because his commission (c) from the king, and instructions to the neighbouring governors, must have taken some time in passing through the several offices: And therefore we can scarce suppose that he reached Jerusalem sooner than the time specified; and from thence to the twenty-fifth day of the sixth month (including the three days of rest that he gave himself before he began), the space will be much about fifty-two days wherein, we suppose, that the whole work was finished. (d) For if Alexander the Great (as Arrianus and Curtius relate) built the walls of Alexandria, which was seven miles in compass, in the space of twenty days, why should it be thought a thing incredible, that a vast number, not of hired, but voluntary men, full of zeal for the work themselves, animated by the example of their rulers, and ranged and distributed in a proper manner for dispatch, should in almost thrice that space of time be able to finish a work of less compass; when they had long summer days for it, plenty of stones and other materials hard at hand, the foundation of the wall unrazed, some parts of it standing entire, only some breaches here and there to be amended; and when their design in the whole was, not to study curiosity, but strength, and to provide themselves with such a fortification for the present, as would secure them from any sudden invasion of their enemies?

How (e) long Nehemiah continued at the Persian court after his return from Jerusalem, the Sacred History nowhere informs us. It tells us, indeed, that he came back again after certain days; but since the word *yamin*, which we render *days*, does equally signify *years*, and in many places of the Hebrew Scriptures is used in that sense, we cannot but wonder, how the generality of chronologers, as well as commentators, came to overlook this sense of the word, and, in so doing, to make Nehemiah's stay at Shushan much shorter than it possibly could be. For since he had been twelve years in reforming what he found amiss among the Jews, and Ezra had been doing the same for thirteen years before him; they must, one would think, have brought their reformation to such a state and stability, that a little time could not have been sufficient so totally to have unhinged it: And therefore we may conclude, that his absence at Court, which have room for these irregularities to grow to such an height, was not for certain days, but for some years continuance; and, consequently, that the author of this part of his life had no intention either to magnify his good offices, or to relate any thing incredible concerning him, since, though he acquaints us with sundry corruptions that had sprung up, yet he makes the time of his absence (if we take his words in their proper sense) long enough for that purpose.

That Nehemiah was the writer of the account of his own government in Judea (for that is the subject of his book) most interpreters are agreed: (f) And as he appears in

(a) Neh. ii. 1.
(b) Ezra viii. 15, 31.
(c) Neh. ii. 6, &c.
(d) Patrick's Commentary,
and Pool's Annotations on Neh. vi. 15.
(e) Patrick's Commentary on Neh. v. 19.

(f) Prideaux's Connection, anno 428.

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that character, it cannot misbecome him to give the world a narrative how himself behaved in that high station ; though in doing this, he could not avoid the saying of something in his own commendation, unless he had been minded, out of his excessive modesty, to conceal from posterity (which it had been invidious to do) an excellent example of his extraordinary virtue and love of his country.

St Paul, no doubt, was a very modest man : (a) He durst not, as he tells us, make himself of the number, or compare himself with such as commended themselves ; and yet, in the very next chapter, (that (b) he might stop the mouths of false Apostles and covetous people) we find him telling the Corinthians, that he preached the Gospel to them freely, and without desiring any contributions of them for his necessary support. (c) “ I robbed other churches, says he, taking wages of them to do you service, and when I was present with you and wanted, I was chargeable to no man :—For in all things I have kept myself from being burdensome to you, and so will I keep myself ; as the truth of Christ is in me, no man shall stop me of this boasting in the regions of Achaia ; for what I do, that I will do, that I may cut off occasion from those that desire occasion, that wherein they glory, they may be found even as we :” And after all this, can any find fault with Nehemiah for telling his reader, that (d) “ what was prepared for me daily, was an ox, and six choice sheep, fowls in proportion, and once in ten days store of all sorts of wine ; yet for all this, required not I the bread of the governor,” i. e. the allowances which were made to the governors appointed by the kings of Persia, to provide them a table, because the bondage was heavy upon this people, and they not in a condition, without much difficulty, to maintain themselves : Wherefore, “ think upon me, O God, for good, according to all that I have done for this people.”

To serve God for nothing, or purely for his own sake, is a notion that perhaps may comport with our glorified state, where our service will be attended with vision ; but at present, it is too romantic, and what the Author of our being expects not from us. He who made us and set the springs in our nature, knows very well, that we are principally moved by hopes and fears, and for this reason has propounded rewards and punishments to us ; nor did we ever find it (till now) accounted a flaw in the character of the worthies of old, or an indication of their mercenary spirits, that in all their good works or sufferings, they (e) “ had a respect to the recompence of the reward, which God, the righteous judge” had promised to give unto his faithful servants.

Ezra, no doubt, was at this time a man of great esteem among his brethren, and no less favoured in the Persian court ; otherwise Artaxerxes would never have granted him a commission to reform and regulate the affairs of the Jewish church, fraught with such ample powers. Ever since that time, the Jews have looked upon him as another Moses, who (as Moses was the giver of the law) revived and restored it, after it had been in a manner quite lost and extinguished in the Babylonish captivity. There is some reason to believe therefore, that (f) this scribe of the law of the God of heaven was the usual title or appellation of honour, whereby Ezra was dignified and distinguished among his countrymen ; and that Artaxerxes might take it upon common report, and so insert it in his commission, as the name whereby he was generally styled among the Jews, without ever giving himself time to consider what was the full purport and intendment of it.

But if even he did attend to this, yet, as the heathens had different kinds of gods, celestial, terrestrial, and infernal, he might easily reconcile this to his own principles, only by supposing, that this God of the Jews was one of the celestial order, and (though a deity peculiar to them) might nevertheless be revered and worshipped by him, in conjunction with his other gods.

(a) 2 Cor. x. 12.
(e) Heb. xi. 26.

(b) Chap. xi. 7.
(f) Ezra vii. 12.

(c) Ibid. ver. 8, &c.

(d) Neh. v. 18.

But, after all, if we reflect a little on the ease and indolence, and in a manner total sequestration from all business, wherein these great monarchs of the East were used to indulge themselves, we shall find reason to believe that Artaxerxes knew nothing of the matter. If he be the same who goes under the name of Ahasuerus in the book of Esther, he had been imposed on by Haman to consent to a bloody decree against the Jews with so little thought and consideration of what he was about, that (a) he did not so much as remember the person at whose instigation it was done: And yet, notwithstanding the great mischief which this negligence of his might have brought upon him, we find him instantly sinking into the like sleepy and careless temper. (b) "Write ye for the Jews (says he to Mordecai and Esther) as it liketh you, in the king's name, and seal it with the king's ring," and whatever is thus wrote and sealed, no man may reverse. And, by parity of reason, why may we not suppose that, when Ezra applied to court for his commission, the whole form of drawing it up was referred to him, and such other Jews as he thought proper to take into his council? For, "Write ye as it liketh you, in the king's name," might (in one case as well as the other) be all that the king had to say to the matter. And indeed, if we look into the contents of the commission itself, we shall soon perceive that it must have been drawn by something more than a heathen hand. For if Ezra himself had been to dictate the words, how could he have expressed the tenor of his commission more fully than in these: (c) "Forasmuch as thou art sent by the king and his seven counsellors, to enquire concerning Judah and Jerusalem, according to the law of thy God, which is in thine hand:" What Jewish king could have given more pious instructions than these: (d) "And thou Ezra, after the wisdom of thy God, set magistrates and judges, such as know the laws of thy God, and teach ye them that know them not?" And where can we find a livelier sense of God's supreme authority, and of that regard which is due from the greatest kings and potentates to his commands, more emphatically expressed than here: "Whatsoever is commanded by the God of heaven, let it be diligently done for the house of the God of heaven?" "O verba! (as Jacobus Capellus, in a kind of rapture, cries out) *literis aureis regum Palatiis inscribenda, atque adeo stylo adamantino fidelium omnium animis inculpanda:*" words fit to be written upon the palaces of kings in letters of gold, and engraved on the minds of all the faithful with a style of adamant!

(e) Who the author of the six first chapters of Ezra was, is a matter of some uncertainty, though it is generally agreed that the same hand which composed the two books of Chronicles was concerned in writing that part of Ezra, because the Chronicle concludes with the very same words wherewith the history begins, which, in ancient authors, to connect the thread of the discourse, (as Grotius observes) is no unusual thing. The Jewish doctors indeed are chiefly of opinion, that these Chronicles were written by Ezra; but this can hardly be, because the author (whoever he was) continues the (f) genealogy of Zerubbabel to the twelfth generation, which is lower than Ezra lived. Nor can Ezra be the author of the six first chapters of the book which bears his name, because the person who wrote it (g) is said to have been at Jerusalem in the time of Darius Hystaspes; whereas Ezra (h) did not go thither until the reign of Artaxerxes. It is most likely therefore, that Ezra, upon his coming to Jerusalem, might meet with certain annals or memoirs kept of the several transactions that had happened since the time of the people's return from captivity, and that, to these (after he had made an extract of such as were true and authentic) he added a farther continuation of the history of his own government. For, that the four last chapters of the book were of his own composing, is evident from this testimony: (i) "And at evening sacrifice, I arose up

From Ezra iv.
7. to the end;
all Esth. Neh.
and part of
Hagg. Zech.
and Malachi.

(a) Esther vii. 5.
(e) Huetii, Demonstr. Prop. 4.
(h) Chap. vii.

(b) Ibid. viii. 8.

(i) Chap. ix. 5.

(c) Ezra vii. 14.

(f) 1 Chron. iii. 19.

(d) Ibid. ver. 25.

(g) Ezra v. and vi.

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from my heaviness, and having rent my garment, and my mantle, I fell upon my knees, and spread out my hands unto the Lord." Then follows the prayer which he made; and immediately it is subjoined, (a) "Now when Ezra had prayed, and when he had confessed, and cast himself down before the House of God:" which plainly shews that Ezra was the author of that part of the book which speaks of himself in the first person.

And, in like manner, that Nehemiah was the writer of what is reputed his, seems to be evident, (b) not only from his own declaration in the front of it, (which was the practice of Herodotus, Thucydides, and other ancient historians in those days) but from the testimony of the Jewish church likewise, which all along received it into their canon, and from the approbation of the seventy interpreters, who, from the very first, gave it a place in their translation under that name.

There is some difficulty indeed in reconciling the account of Josephus concerning Sanballat, and what is recorded of him in Nehemiah. Josephus (c) tells us, "That he being made governor of Samaria, under the last Darius, married his daughter to one, whose father had been high priest of the Jews, and that when his son-in-law was thereupon driven out of Jerusalem, he obtained leave of Alexander to build a temple on Mount Gerizzim, like that at Jerusalem, and to make him the priest thereof." Now, to make this accord with what we read in Nehemiah, (d) the general opinion is, that there were two Sanballats, the first the Sanballat of the Holy Scriptures, and the other the Sanballat of Josephus; and that there were two marriages contracted by two different persons, sons of two different high priests of the Jews, with two different women, who were each daughters of two different Sanballats; the first the daughter of the Sanballat of the Scriptures, and the other the daughter of the Sanballat of Josephus, and that he who married the first of them was the son of Joiada, but he who married the second of them was the son of Johanan, and brother of Jaddua. But there is no reason to have recourse to this perplexed solution, seeing that Josephus has incurred a palpable mistake in point of chronology. For, (e) since this marriage was consummated while Joiada, the son of Eliashib, was the high priest of the Jews, even in the fifth year of his pontificate, (f) and since he entered upon that office in the eleventh year of Darius Nothus, who reigned in all nineteen years, it must follow that the licence which Sanballat obtained for the building of a temple at Samaria, was not from Alexander, but from this Darius, in the fifteenth year of his reign, and above eighty years before the Darius Codomannus, whom Alexander vanquished, was known. There is no occasion, therefore, to suppose any more Sanballats than one, or to extend his life to any immoderate length; only we may perceive that Josephus was under a mistake in placing this Sanballat under the reign of Codomannus, who should have been placed under a former Darius, surnamed Nothus; and consequently, that all he tells us of this Sanballat's attending Alexander in his wars, and obtaining of him a licence to build a temple, is a mere fiction founded on that mistake; because in Alexander's time the Samaritans, by murdering Andromachus, his governor of Syria, had so incensed that great conqueror against them, that, instead of granting them any favours, (g) we find him making all the havock of them that he could.

Who the author of the book of Esther was, the opinions of the learned are various. Some ascribe it to Ezra, others to Mordecai, others to Mordecai and Esther in conjunction, and others again to the joint labours of the great synagogue, who, from the time of Ezra to Simon the Just, superintended the edition and canon of Scripture. Those who contend for Mordecai, have these words to allege in his behalf: (h) "And Mordecai wrote these things, and sent letters unto all the Jews that were in all the provinces

(a) Ezra x. 1.

(b) *Huetii*, Demonst. Prop. 4.

(c) *Jewish Antiq.* lib. xi. c. 7. and 8.

(d) *Prideaux's Connection*, Anno 409.

(e) Neh. xiii. 28.

(f) *Patrick's Commentary*.

(g) *Joseph. contra Apion*, lib. ii.

(h) Esther ix. 20, 23.

of king Ahasuerus, and the Jews undertook to do as Mordecai had written to them :” (a) But the thing is evident, that these words relate not to the book itself, but to the circular letters which Mordecai sent to the Jews in all the provinces of the Persian empire, signifying what a mighty deliverance God had vouchsafed them, and, in commemoration of it, instituting an annual festival to be observed for ever.

From Ezra iv.
7. to the end ;
all Esth. Neh.
and part of
Hagg. Zech.
and Malachi.

And indeed the institution of this annual festival, and its continued observation, is a standing proof that this history of Esther is real and not fictitious ; since we can hardly conceive how a wise nation should at first appoint, and afterwards continue, the celebration of this solemn time of feasting and rejoicing every year, merely because a certain man among them had once the good fortune to write an agreeable fable or romance ; much less can we conceive, from what motive a whole assembly of learned doctors should receive a writing of no better character into the canon of their Scriptures, or (to make it of more universal use) should honour it with a Greek translation.

It must be owned indeed, that no foreign author has taken any notice of this piece of history ; but the reason hereof is obvious, viz. (b) because the authors who wrote of the affairs of Persia at this time entered no farther into them than as they were coincident with the affairs of Greece ; and though the six last chapters of this history are not to be found in any Hebrew copy, yet Origen is of opinion, (c) that once they were extant, though now lost, and that from it the Septuagint formed their translation ; though others (with more probability) think, that (as the history of this memorable transaction might be recorded by divers hands) there were once two Hebrew copies of it, one in a larger, and the other in a less volume, and that, as the less is what we have at present, from the larger has proceeded the Greek copy, with its sundry additions.

Haman, we read, was an Amalekite, one of that nation, (d) against which God pronounced a curse ; and therefore, upon this consideration, Mordecai might think himself not obliged to pay him the reverence which he expected ; and, if the rest of the Jews had the like notion of him, this might be reason sufficient for his extending his resentment against the whole nation. But there seems to be something more in the reverence which the people were commanded to pay him, than what is the effect of civil respect. The king of Persia, we know, expected a kind of Divine adoration from all that approached his presence ; (e) as we read of one Timagoras, upon whom the people of Athens passed sentence of death for his worshipping of Darius, accounting the honour of their whole city debased by this mean submission of one of their citizens, though at that time Darius was one of the greatest monarchs upon earth. And as the kings of Persia did arrogate this to themselves, so they sometimes imparted it to their chief friends and favourites, as it seems at this time to have been the case with Haman. For we can hardly conceive why the king should give a particular command, (f) that all his servants should reverence him, if by this reverence no more is intended than that they should shew him a respect suitable to his station : But now, if we suppose that the homage expected from them was such as came near to idolatry, (g) we need not wonder, that a Jew should deny that honour, or the outward expressions of it, to any man, since the wise and sober Grecians did positively refuse to give it to the very kings themselves. And that this was the case before us, the author of the Apocryphal additions to the book of Esther seems to imply, when he introduces Mordecai as praying in these words,—(h) “ Thou knowest, O Lord, that it is not contumacy, nor pride, nor desire of vain glory, that makes me not worship Haman ; for I would willingly kiss his feet for the safety of Israel. But I do it, that I may not prefer the glory of a man to the glory of God, nor adore any one but thee, my Lord, alone.

(a) *Huetii*, *Demonst. Propos. 4.*

(b) *Ibid.*

(c) *Patrick's Commentary.*

(d) *Exod. xvii. 14.*
tations on Esther iii.

(e) *Valer. Max. lib. iv. c. 3.*

(f) *Esther iii. 2.*

(g) *Pool's Anno-*

(h) *Esther xiii. 12, &c.*

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&c. or 4947.
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Though we are far from pretending to apologise, either for the injustice of Ahasuerus in abdicating his queen, or for the conduct of Esther in going to his bed, yet a good deal of this might be resolved into the custom of a nation, where the king was absolute, and his subjects mere vassals; where the will of the prince, I say, was a perfect law, and a plurality of wives and concubines reputed honourable. This, however, may be said in behalf of Ahasuerus, that he did not divorce his wife, without first consulting his counsellors, and such as were best acquainted with the laws of their country; and therefore, if there was any iniquity in it, they were the persons chiefly to be blamed, who represented the queen's disobedience as a crime of such a dangerous nature, that it would have had a noxious influence upon the whole nation, had it not been severely punished. And this may be said in excuse for Esther, that the words which we render (a) *she was brought*, may equally signify *she was taken away*, viz. by violence; (b) for (as the Targum upon this passage relates the matter) "Mordecai hearing of the king's edict for the collection of all the beautiful virgins in his dominions, hid his cousin in a private place, where the officers could not find her; but when Esther (whom all the neighbourhood knew to be a great beauty) was missing, an order from the king to Mordecai was procured, which, upon pain of death, obliged him to produce her." However this be, it is certain, that the persons whom the king took to his bed in this manner were not reputed harlots, but became his lawful wives, though wives of an inferior degree; and therefore it is no great wonder, that Esther, in these circumstances (though a very virtuous woman), should consent; nor can we tell, but that Mordecai and she might have a dispensation from God (as God, no doubt, can dispense with his own laws), supposing there were any contrariety to the Divine laws in this transaction.

To account for the humour of princes, and their management of public affairs, is next to a thing impossible. We see, even among us, that great men are sometimes unmindful of the highest services that are done them, and take no care to reward them, especially if the person be in himself obscure, and not supported by a proper recommendation. And therefore we are not at all to wonder, if a prince, that buried himself in indolence, and made it a part of his grandeur to live unacquainted and unconcerned with what passed in his dominions (as this was the custom of most eastern kings), should overlook the great service which Mordecai had done him; or if he ordered him a reward, that, by the artifice of those at court, who were no well wishers to the Jews, he might be disappointed of it.

There seems, however, to have been a particular direction of Providence in having his reward delayed till this time, when he and all his nation were appointed to destruction, when the remembrance of his services might be a means to recommend them to the king's mercy, and the honours conferred on him a deep mortification to his adversary. These honours indeed were very remarkable; but by Haman's manner of proposing them, they seem to have been the usual marks of distinction and esteem, that the kings of Persia conferred on those whom they were minded to make conspicuous; and so far was Mordecai from being elated with them, that as soon as the solemnity was over, we read, (c) that he returned to his duty, and attendance at the king's gate.

He had declared himself a Jew, to satisfy the people at court, that he could not, with a good conscience, comply with the king's command relating to the reverence which was to be paid to Haman; and the interposition of Providence in behalf of the Jewish nation, even during their captivity, had been so visible, that the wise men about Haman might, from experience, form a conjecture, that if their God was become their friend (as by this strange turn of affairs in favour of Mordecai it looked as if he was), no weapon forged against them would prosper; because they had seen so many plots, which would have crushed any other nation, turn to their advancement, as well as their ene-

(a) Esther ii. 8.

(b) Patrick's Commentary.

(c) Esther vi. 12.

mies destruction. The advice (*a*) which Achior gave to Holofernes, is founded upon the known experience of those times, and bespeaks a man well acquainted with the state of the Jews: Now therefore, my Lord and governor, if there be any error in this people, and they sin against their God, let us consider that this will be their ruin.— But if there be no iniquity in their nation, let my lord now pass by, lest their Lord defend them, and their God be for them, and we become a reproach before all the world.’ Considering then, that Mordecai was of the seed of the Jews, a people whom God had wonderfully raised from under great oppressions, and that at this time there was a desperate design, by Haman’s management, carrying on against them; Haman’s wise men might easily, and without the spirit of prophecy divine, (*b*) that as Mordecai (whom they knew to be a man of great courage and wisdom) was now got into the king’s favour, it would not be long before he would find an opportunity of applying to him (who was a person of a mild disposition) for a revocation of the bloody decree which Haman, by imposing upon his credulity, had procured, and consequently of ruining Haman in the king’s good graces. For the known instability of court-favours, and the little quarter that there is given to rivals or enemies, made it no hard matter, from Mordecai’s advancement, to read Haman’s destiny.

From Ezra iv.
7. to the end;
all Esth. Neh.
and part of
Hagg. Zech.
and Malachi.

Haman indeed was outrageously bent against the Jews, and what he offered the king in lieu of the damage which his revenues might sustain by the destruction of so many of his subjects, is a prodigious sum for any private man to be owner of; but we read of several such persons in history, who, in those ancient times, were possessors of much greater. Pithius the Lydian, for instance, (*c*) when Xerxes passed into Greece, was possessed of two thousand talents of silver, and four millions of daricks in gold, which together amounted to near five millions and an half of our sterling money: and (*d*) Marcus Crassus the Roman, after he had consecrated the tenth of what he had to Hercules, feasted all the people of Rome at ten thousand tables, and given a donative of corn to every citizen, as much as would last him three months, found the remainder of his estate to be seven thousand one hundred Roman talents, which amount to above a million and an half of our money. This may seem a little strange to us at present, but our wonder will cease, if we consider that, from the time of David and Solomon, and for fifteen hundred years afterwards, the riches of this kind were in much greater plenty than they are now. The prodigious quantities of gold and silver which Alexander found in the treasures of Darius; the vast loads of them which were often carried before the Roman generals when they returned from conquered provinces; and the excessive sums which certain of their emperors expended in donatives, feasts, shows, and other instances of luxury and prodigality, are of this proof sufficient: (*e*) but at length the mines of the ancient Ophir, which furnished all this plenty, being exhausted, and by the burning of cities, and devastation of countries, which followed upon the eruptions of the Goths, Vandals, and Huns, and other barbarous nations in the west, and of the Saracens, Turks, and Tartars in the east, a great part of the gold and silver which the world then abounded with, being wasted and destroyed by this means, the great scarcity of both which afterwards ensued was occasioned; nor have the mines of Mexico, Peru, and Brasil, been as yet able fully to repair it.

The great sum which Haman would have given to gratify his revenge against the Jewish nation, was an additional provocation to them, no doubt, to slay every one who came to annoy them; but then it must be considered, that in this they acted by virtue of an edict which authorized them to stand upon their own defence; that they were not the first aggressors, but only opposed those that openly assaulted them, and were for putting an unjust decree in execution against them; and as the Amalekites, who might

(*a*) Judith v. 20, 21.

(*c*) Herodotus, lib. vii.

(*b*) Pool’s Annotations, and Patrick’s Commentary on Esther vi. 13.

(*d*) Plutarch, in Crasso.

(*e*) Prideaux’s Connection, anno 543.

A. M. 3475,
&c. or 4947.
Ant. Chris.
529, &c.
or 464.

be dispersed throughout the Persian dominions, were the known and inveterate enemies of the Jews, and following now the fortune of Haman, might be forward enough to execute the decree which he had procured against them, it is therefore reasonably presumed, that most of those whom the Jews, in their necessary defence both in Shushan, and in the provinces, did destroy, were of that devoted nation; and that by this their slaughter, the prophecies against Amalek, were accomplished.

However this be, we cannot take leave of this wonderful deliverance of the Jewish nation, without making this one reflection upon it, viz. (a) "That though in the whole there was no extraordinary manifestation of God's power, no particular cause or agent, that was in its working advanced above the ordinary pitch of nature; yet the contrivance, and suiting these ordinary agents appointed by God, is in itself more admirable than if the same end had been effected by means that were truly miraculous. That a king should not sleep is no unusual thing, nor that he should solace his waking thoughts by hearing the annals of his own kingdom, or the journals of his own reign, read to him, &c. but that he should lie awake at that time especially, when Haman was watching to destroy the Jews; and that in the Chronicles of the kingdom, they should light on that place where Mordecai's unrewarded services were recorded; that the king thereupon should resolve forthwith to do him honour; that Haman should come in at the very nick of time when he was so disposed, and should ignorantly determine what honour should be done him, and be appointed to that ungrateful office himself; 'This was from the Keeper of Israel, who neither slumbers nor sleeps, and was truly marvelous in his people's eyes.' For though miracles in their nature are more apt to strike the sense, yet such secret contrivances of God's wisdom and providence do more affect the understanding: the one works astonishment, the other admiration."

DISSERTATION II.

OF EZRA'S EDITION OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES, AND THE INSTITUTION OF SYNAGOGUE-WORSHIP.

EZRA, no doubt, in his knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, was a great man. The Sacred History gives him this character, that (b) "he was a ready scribe in the law of Moses, which the Lord God of Israel had given." The Jewish doctors look upon him as the second founder of it; and are generally of opinion, that he was the prophet Malachi, (c) and had that title given him, because he was sent, as God's messenger, to revive their religion, after it had been in a manner quite extinguished. Nay, (d) many ancient fathers of the Christian Church attribute more to him in this particular than even the Jews themselves; for they suppose, that in the Babylonish captivity all the Scriptures were entirely lost and destroyed, but that Ezra, by Divine revelation, renewed and recovered them again. This, however, is carrying the compliment too far, and leaving the authority of the Holy Scriptures to stand upon a very precarious bottom; since some may be apt to infer, "that he, who is said thus wonderfully to have restored them, might much more likely have forged the whole."

(a) *Patrick's Commentary* on Esther vii. 10.
Paraph. in Malach. and *Buxtorf* in *Tiberiade*, c. iii.
lib. iii. c. 15. *Tertul.* de *Habitu Mulierum*, c. iii. *Hieronymum* contra *Helvidium*, *August.* de *Miraculis sacræ*
Script. lib. ii. and *Chrysost.* Hom. viii. in *Ep. ad Hebræos*.

(b) *Ezra* vii. 6.

(c) *Vid. Chald.*

(d) *Vid. Irenæum* adversus *Hæres.*

We readily acknowledge indeed, that in the time of Josiah (through the two preceding reigns of Manasseh and Amon) copies of the law might be very scarce. But by the pious care of that good prince, we are informed that this defect was soon remedied; that copies were taken of the original law that was then found in the temple; that search was made in the schools of the prophets, and in all other places where they could be found, for the other parts of Holy Writ, and transcripts formed out of these likewise; so that, in a short time, all that were desirous to know the law of their God, either by writing them out themselves, or procuring others to do it for them, were furnished with copies both of the law and the prophets. Within a few years, indeed, the city and temple were destroyed, and with them was the authentic copy of the laws, which was repositied in the temple, burnt and consumed; but before this calamity befel the Jews, all the Sacred Writings then extant were got into private hands, and carried away with them into captivity.

From Ezra iv.
7. to the end;
all Esth. Neh.
and part of
Hagg. Zech.
and Malachi.

That Daniel had a copy of the Holy Scriptures with him in Babylon is certain, because (a) he not only quotes the law, but makes mention likewise (b) of the prophecies of the prophet Jeremiah, which he could not have done had he not had them by him. That at the finishing of the temple (which was in the sixth of Darius, and above fifty years before Ezra came to Jerusalem), copies of the law were in common use, no one can doubt, who reads how the priests and Levites were settled in their respective functions, (c) "according as it is written in the books of Moses:" And that, when the people called for the Scripture, to have it read unto them, they did not request of Ezra to get it anew dictated to him, but that he (d) "would bring forth the book of the law of Moses, which the Lord had commanded Israel;" which plainly implies, that all the people well knew that this book was then extant, and needed not such a miraculous expedient as that of a Divine revelation for its recovery.

But if Ezra did not restore the Scripture in this manner, the question is, what he did towards it? Now to this it may be answered, that upon his coming to Jerusalem, (e) he got together as many copies as he could meet with, either in private hands or public repositories; that, by comparing these copies one with another, he found out the true reading, and so corrected all the mistakes that had crept into them, either through the negligence or ignorance of transcribers; that, having thus made the copies perfect, he collected from them all the books of which the Holy Scriptures did then consist (for some books that appeared later were admitted after this time), disposed them in their proper order, and so far settled the canon of Scripture; that for the illustration, connection, and completion of these books (especially such as were historical), he added some passages that were not in them before, and changed some names that were then grown obsolete for such as were more modern and better understood, which, as he was a prophet, he was authorised to do; that, having thus made the books in all their parts perfect and intelligible, for the still greater ease and convenience of the vulgar, he caused the whole to be wrote out in the Chaldee character, which, after the Babylonish captivity, was in general use among the people, so that the old Hebrew letters were, from that time, laid aside among the Jews, and only retained by the Samaritans; and, lastly, that, to ascertain the reading of this introduced character, he added the vowel-

(a) Dan. ix. 11, 13.

(b) Ibid. ver. 2.

(c) Ezra vi. 18.

(d) Neh. viii. 1. [The utter impossibility of the law's having been forged by Ezra or by any other man posterior to the age of Moses, has been proved, I trust, with the force of demonstration, in the Introduction to this Work; and whoever wishes to see the

objections of *Le Clerc* and *Dr Geddes* to the authenticity of the Pentateuch completely refuted, will find his wish gratified in *Dr Graves's Lectures on the four last books of the Pentateuch*. Of all the Biblical works of the age, I know not one more worthy of the attention of the liberal Christians of the present generation than those lectures.]

(e) *Prideaux's Connection*, Anno 446.

A. M. 3475,
&c. or 4947.
Ant. Chris.
529, &c.
or 464.

points that are now found in our Hebrew Bibles. But whether this was of his doing, or the work of some later hand, is a matter of much debate among the learned.

Those who maintain that Ezra (whom all held to be a prophet) was the author of these points, and that they, consequently, are of the same authority with the text itself, argue in this manner:—That when the Hebrew language ceased to be the mother tongue of the Jews (as all agree it did after the Babylonish captivity), it thence became in a manner impossible to teach it, without the assistance of the vowel-points; and therefore, at least, they must have begun in the time of Ezra, and continued in use ever after: That two ancient books, called *Bahir* and *Zohar*, which are said to have been written, the one a little before, and the other a little after the time of our Saviour, make express mention of these points in more places than one: That, whereas it is said, on the other side, that the Masorites of Tiberias (above five hundred years after Christ) were the inventors of these points; this appears unlikely, because the schools which the Jews once had in Judea were at this time all suppressed, nor was there any number of learned men left in the nation of sufficient ability for such a work: And, lastly, that if it be allowed, that the present points are not of the same authority with the letters themselves, but only of a late and human invention, this will weaken the authority of the Scriptures, and leave the Sacred Text to an arbitrary and uncertain reading and interpretation.

Those who maintain the contrary opinion, viz. that these vowel-points are of a later date than Ezra, fortify themselves with such arguments as these:—That the sacred books which the Jews make use of in their synagogue-service, neither have, nor ever had, any of these points in them; which can only be imputed to this,—That when the Holy Scriptures began first to be publicly read in the synagogues (which was presently after this edition which Ezra made of them), there were no such vowel-points then in being: That, if we compare the translation of the Septuagint, the Chaldee paraphrases, or the Latin version of St Jerom, with the present pointed Hebrew Bibles, we shall in several places find, that they read the text otherwise than according to the present punctuation; which is an argument that these points were either not in being, or not in any great authority in those times: And, lastly, that if we consult Philo Judæus, or Josephus, who are two of the oldest authors of the Jews, or any of the ancient Christian writers for several ages after Christ, we shall not find one word mentioned of these points, though they could not but have sundry occasions to take notice of them, if either they had been in use, or of such great credit and authority with the Jews as is pretended. And therefore (to answer the arguments on the other side) they allege, that the books of *Bahir* and *Zohar* are not near so ancient as they are reputed; that for above a thousand years after their pretended composure, the Jews themselves knew nothing of them, nor were they once mentioned by any author whatever during that interval; and therefore there is reason to think, that a false date of antiquity was fraudulently put to them, to give them some sanction, and to recommend them to the world with a better credit.

That the Masorites of Tiberias were certainly in being a long time in Judea, and, in their way of learning, were not a little eminent; for St Jerom himself informs us that he made use of them: That though there may be some difficulty in reading without points, yet since we find that the Samaritans, who understand Hebrew no better than the Jews, have no points to this day, yet can read the Hebrew text in the Samaritan character, we need not doubt, but that custom, good sense, and the coherence of the discourse, will supply rules for the remedying of these inconveniences: And, lastly, since there is no language in the world wherein there are not several equivocal expressions, which may occasion an ambiguity in the sense; though points in this case may be of some use, yet they cannot totally secure us from error, because faults in transcribing or printing, and variations in pointing, are unavoidable.

To accommodate the matter then, as well as we can, between these contending parties, though these vowel-points were never anciently esteemed any part of the Sacred Scripture of the Old Testament, but only additions of human invention, for the more easy reading of the text, because they were never received by the Jews (to whom were committed the Oracles of God) into the books which were read in their synagogues; yet we have good reason to conclude, that upon the Hebrew's ceasing to be a vulgar language (as it certainly did in the time of Ezra), they must of necessity have been introduced.

From Ezra iv.
7. to the end;
all Esth Neh.
and part of
Hagg. Zech.
and Malachi.

When every child learned the Hebrew tongue from his cradle, it was no hard matter for those, who thus understood it by rote, to learn to read it by the letters only, without the vowels; but when it became a dead language, the case was altered: (a) For then, instead of understanding it first in order to read it, they were first to read it in order to understand it; and therefore, having not the previous knowledge of the language to direct them herein, they must necessarily have had some other helps, in order to know with what vowel each syllable was to be pronounced; and to give them this help, the vowel-points seem certainly to have been invented; and therefore the time of this invention cannot be placed later than the time when they became necessary, i. e. when the Hebrew became a dead language, and so was acquirable no other way than by study and instruction.

From this necessity of instruction, and probably not long after Ezra's edition of the Holy Scripture, there sprung up a set of men among the Jews, whose profession it was to write out copies of the Hebrew text, and to preserve and teach the true reading of it. What they did of this kind is called by the Jews the *masorah*, i. e. the *tradition*; because they pretend to have the true reading (as the Talmudists pretend to have the true interpretation) of the Scriptures handed down to them from generation to generation. However, as their whole business was to study the true reading of the Hebrew text, to preserve it from being corrupted, and to teach it to others, it is highly probable that they were the first inventors of vowel-points, because the whole use of these points was to be subservient to this purpose.

But though these points might be invented by the Hebrew grammarians, whom we call Masorites, much earlier than some will allow; yet, from their late appearance in the world, it seems very probable, that as at first they might invent them only for their private use, so for some time they might reserve them to themselves, and teach them only to their scholars. For the Jews, we must know, had anciently two sorts of schools, those of the Masorites and those of the Rabbins. The former taught only the Hebrew language, and to read the Scriptures in it; but the other taught their pupils to understand the word of God, and all the interpretations of it. These were the great doctors of divinity among them, to whom the Masorites were as much inferior as the teachers of grammar schools among us are to the professors of divinity in our universities.

As long therefore as these vowel-points went no higher than the schools of the Masorites, they were not much regarded among their learned men; and this is the reason why we find no mention made of them either in the Talmud or in the writings of some ancient fathers, from whom it might have been expected. But after the publication of the Talmud, the Jewish doctors thought it advisable, in order to preserve the right reading of the text, (as the Mishna and Gemara were supposed to preserve its right interpretation), to take this punctuation of the Masorites into their divinity-schools; and having reviewed and corrected it with great care, they added it to the text, and so gave it all the venerable aspect that it now bears.

But though these vowel-points were added to the text by such persons as understood

(a) *Prideaux's Connection*, Anno 446.

A. M. 3475,
&c. or 4947.
Ant. Chris.
529, &c.
or 464.

the language perfectly, and having since undergone the review and correction of many ages, may be justly accounted a work as complete in its kind as can be done by human art; yet, since it was only done by human art, it is no authentic part of the Scriptures: And therefore these points are not so unalterably fixed to the text, but that a change may be made in them, when the nature of the context, the analogy of grammar, or the style of the language, shall give a sufficient reason for it; especially considering, that notwithstanding their exact fixation at first, they are still liable to the mistakes of transcribers and printers, and, by reason of their number, the smallness of their figures, and their position under the letters, are more liable to suffer by them than any other sort of writing whatever.

So that, upon the whole, it appears, that though these vowel-points were not affixed to the Hebrew text by Ezra himself, yet were they of early date after his edition of the Holy Scriptures; that though they did not immediately appear in the world, nor are taken notice of by any writer of repute for many ages after; yet this was occasioned by their being confined to the school of the Masorites, who in all probability were the first inventors of them: And though, being of human invention only, they cannot be supposed of equal authority with the text itself; yet are they of excellent use for the preservation of its right reading, and for the prevention of innumerable perplexities and ambiguities that would otherwise be incident to it.

The learned are not a little divided concerning the rise and antiquity of the Jewish synagogues: For some contend that they were in use under the tabernacle and first temple, whilst others assert, that they had no being until the times of the captivity. The former, in behalf of their opinion, urge, (a) that as in the wilderness the court of the tabernacle could not contain the hundredth part of the worshippers of the God of Israel, and as in the promised land the temple was too far distant for devout persons of every tribe to resort to it every Sabbath-day; there was a necessity for other places to be appointed for the service of God, that the sense of religion might not be extinguished and lost. To this purpose they observe, that the Levites were dispersed in several cities, and the prophets and sons of the prophets settled in their respective colleges, that they might be ready at hand, upon all occasions, to expound the law, and instruct the people in their duty, whenever they met together for that purpose. And therefore we find the Shunamite's husband thus expostulating with his wife, (b) "Wherefore wilt thou go to the man of God to-day, seeing it is neither new-moon nor the Sabbath;" which plainly implies, that at such stated seasons as these, the custom was to resort to such teachers for instruction. And if this was the custom, there is no question to be made, but that proper places were appointed for their reception. It is an unworthy imputation therefore to think, that so many temples should be built for idol-worship, and yet none should have zeal or piety enough to erect a synagogue for the God of heaven, or that the pharisees should set up these useful inventions, and yet the elders, and prophets, and holy men under the Old Testament, should want them.

These are the principal arguments on that side; but the silence of Scripture seems to be a strong confutation of them: For, had these places of religious worship been in use among the Jews in the time we are now speaking of, we cannot conceive why there should not as frequent a mention have been made of them in the Old Testament as there is in the New. The common, therefore, and indeed the most probable opinion is, (c) that there were no such things as synagogues built before the captivity of Babylon and the destruction of the temple; that the Jews, seeing themselves carried away into a strange country, where they had no temple for Divine service, came to a resolution of building such houses as were afterwards called synagogues, there to be instructed in the law, and to worship the God of their fathers in the best manner they could on

(a) Mede's Works, lib. iv. p. 1049.

(b) 2 Kings iv. 23.

(c) Jurieu, Histoire des Dogmes, p. i. c. 17.

every Sabbath-day; and that, upon their return, finding the great conveniency of such like buildings, they erected the same in their own country, as they had done before in the land of their captivity, and herein were followed by the Jews of the dispersion, in all parts of the world wherein they lived.

From Ezra iv.
7. to the end;
all Esth. Neh.
and part of
Hagg. Zech.
and Malachi.

After Ezra had set forth a correct edition of the law, the prophets, and other sacred writings that were extant in his time, his next care was to appoint proper persons, viz. the most learned of the Levites, and other scribes that were well skilled in these writings, to read and expound them to his people. (a) This, no doubt, they did at first in the same manner that himself had done, i. e. by gathering the people together in some wide street or open place of the city, that was of the fittest capacity to receive them. But in the wet and winter seasons of the year, the inconvenience of this came to be felt; so that, in process of time, they erected houses and tabernacles wherein to meet for this purpose: And this was the true cause and original † of such edifices in Judea.

Synagogues were public edifices, situate either within or without their city, and generally in an elevated place. (b) They were usually raised above any private house, (except when there was an interdiction from the civil power) because the Jews have a notion that it is a dishonour to God to have his house inferior, nay, so much as equal to those of men; and in whatever city this happens, they threaten it with a speedy destruction. They are always roofed and covered over, and by this are distinguished from the *proseuchæ*, which were commonly in the fields, and open to the heavens. In the midst of them there is a desk or pulpit, made, very probably, in imitation of that which (as (c) we read) Ezra made use of, from whence the book or roll of the law is read very solemnly, and from whence both he that expounds it, or he that preaches to the congregation at any time, always delivers himself. At the upper end of the synagogue, and over against the door which ever stands to the west, there is a chest or press wherein the book of the law is kept, wrapt in a fine embroidered cloth, and (what is uncommon in our churches) during the time of Divine service the women are separated from the men, and seated in a gallery enclosed with lattices.

Every town wherein there were ten *batelnim*, i. e. ten persons of full age and free condition, always at leisure on week-days as well as Sabbaths, to attend on Divine service, was thought large enough to have a synagogue built in it: otherwise it was not; because the Jewish notion is, that less than such a number could not make a congregation, and without a congregation, no part of the synagogue service could be performed. But as their notion was farther, that any person, Gentile as well as Jew, might be permitted to erect a synagogue, because the holiness of the place (as they thought) consisted not so much in the fabric, as in its being set a-part and dedicated to holy uses; it thence came to pass, that though there were but few at first, yet in process of time they became so numerous, that, in our Saviour's time, there was no town in Judea but what

(a) *Prideaux's Connection.*

† Mr Basnage, in his History of the Jews, is of opinion, that the origin of synagogues was not until the reign of the Asmonæans, some few ages before Christ, and he imputes it to this occasion:—The zealous traditionists, who made long commentaries upon the law, thought it a crime to keep the people (whose applause they mightily desired) in ignorance of them, and instead of confining their explications to Jerusalem, where they found themselves too much slighted and confined, they carried them into every city, where there were oratories, and public places of assembly. Before this, private persons made their prayers to God in their houses, where they had a place set apart for that holy exercise. It was generally upon the top of the house (for their houses were

flat-roofed) that the family and their friends met together to read some portion of the law on the Sabbath-day; and, when there was any prophet in the city, the devout people assembled at his house. But after that the doctors had added their traditions and commentaries to the law, the business of interpreters became so much the more necessary, because those traditions were not written; so that the number of interpreters and interpretations encreased daily. For this reason convenient places were made choice of, that the people might the better meet together to be instructed; and from hence, in all probability, it is, that they derive their synagogues. Lib. v. c. 4.

(b) *Basnage's History of the Jews.*

(c) Nehem. viii. 4.

A. M. 3475,
&c. or 4947.
Ant. Chris.
529, &c.
or 464.

had one or more in it; that in Tiberias, a city of Galilee, there were no less than twelve, and (if we may credit the Jews) four hundred and eighty in Jerusalem. The buildings were contrived much after the same manner as our parish churches, had over their doors or entrance this inscription written, "This is the gate of the Lord, the righteous shall enter into it." And upon the walls within were these, or such like sentences. "Remember thy Creator. Keep thy foot when thou goest into the house of the Lord. Silence is commendable in the time of prayer. And, Prayers without attention, are like a body without a soul," &c.

(a) 1. In the synagogue service the first office was prayer. Their prayers at first were but very few, but have since increased to a very large bulk, which makes the synagogue service very long and tedious. What they reckon the most solemn part of their prayers are those which they call *Shemoneh Eshreth*, i. e. † the eighteen prayers which, according to them, were composed and instituted by Ezra, and the great synagogue; and therefore they enjoin all that are at age, of what sex or condition soever,

(a) *Prideaux's Connection.*

† These prayers were originally no more than eighteen, but R. Gamaliel, a little before the destruction of Jerusalem, added the nineteenth (which is the 12th in the subsequent order) against Christians, who are therein meant by the names of apostates and heretics; and that we may judge of the merit of these prayers, a very learned hand has given us the following translation of them, in the same order as they are in the Jewish liturgies.

"I. Blessed be thou, O Lord, our God, the God of our fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the great God, powerful and tremendous; the High God, bountifully dispensing benefits; the Creator and Possessor of the universe, who rememberest the good deeds of our fathers, and in thy love sendest a Redeemer to those who are descended from them, for thy Name's sake, O King, our Helper, our Saviour, and our Shield. Blessed art thou, our Lord, who art the Shield of Abraham.

II. Thou, O Lord, art powerful for ever. Thou raisest the dead to life, and art mighty to save. Thou sendest down the dew, stillest the winds, and makest the rain to come down upon the earth, and sustainest with thy beneficence all that live therein; and of thy abundant mercy makest the dead again to live. Thou helpest up those that fall; thou curest the sick; thou loosest them that are bound, and makest good thy word of truth to those that sleep in the dust. Who is to be compared to thee, O thou Lord of might? And who is like unto thee, O our King, who killest and makest alive, and makest salvation to spring up as the herb out of the field? Thou art faithful, to make the dead rise again to life. Blessed art thou, O God, who raisest the dead to life.

III. Thou art holy, and thy name is holy, and thy saints do praise thee every day. Selah. For a great king, and an holy one art thou, O God. Blessed art thou, O Lord, God most holy.

IV. Thou of thy mercy givest knowledge to men, and teachest them understanding; give graciously unto us knowledge, wisdom, and understanding. Blessed art thou, O Lord, who graciously givest knowledge unto men.

V. Bring us back, O our Father, to the observance

of thy law, and make us to adhere to thy precepts; and do thou, O our King, draw us near to thy worship, and convert us unto thee by perfect repentance in thy presence. Blessed art thou, O Lord, who vouchsafest to receive us by repentance.

VI. Be thou merciful to us, O our Father, for we have sinned; pardon us, O our King, for we have transgressed against thee, for thou art a God, good and ready to pardon, Blessed art thou, O Lord most gracious, who multiplieth thy mercies in the forgiveness of sins.

VII. Look, we beseech thee, upon our afflictions: Be thou on our side in all our contentions; and plead thou our cause in all our litigations; and make haste to redeem us with a perfect redemption, for thy name's sake: For thou art our God, our King, and a strong Redeemer. Blessed art thou, O Lord, the Redeemer of Israel.

VIII. Heal us, O Lord our God, and we shall be healed; save us, and we shall be saved; for thou art our praise. Bring unto us sound health, and a perfect remedy for all our infirmities, for all our griefs, and for all our wounds; for thou art a God who healeth, and art merciful. Blessed art thou, O Lord, our God, who curest the diseases of thy people of Israel.

IX. Bless us, O Lord, our God, in every work of our hands, and bless unto us the seasons of the year, and give us the dew and the rain to be a blessing unto us upon the face of all our land, and satiate the world with thy blessings, and send down moisture upon every part of the earth that is habitable. Blessed art thou, O Lord, who givest thy blessing to the years.

X. Convocate us together by the sound of the great trumpet, to the enjoyment of our liberty; and lift up thy ensigns to call together all of the captivity from the four quarters of the earth, to our own land. Blessed art thou, O Lord, who gatherest together the exile of the people of Israel."

But this is enough for a specimen. The rest are much of the same strain; but the reader that is desirous to see them, will find them in Dr *Prideaux's* Connection of the Old and New Testament, part i. lib. vi.

either in private or public, to repeat them three times a-day, and on every synagogue day, they offer them up with the greatest solemnity in their public assemblies. These prayers, however, are but of the same nature that the Lord's prayer is in our public service, i. e. the fundamental and principal part; for besides these, they have some prayers going before, some following after, and others interspersed between them, which make the liturgies very tedious, and justify our Saviour's finding fault with their long prayers.

From Ezra iv. 7. to the end; all Esth. Neh. and part of Hagg. Zech. and Malachi.

2. In the synagogue-service there are three things that are read, the Shema, the Law, and the Prophets. The Shema consists of three portions of Scripture; the first is from the beginning of the 4th verse of the vith chapter of Deuteronomy to the end of the 9th verse: The second, from the beginning of the 13th verse of the xith chapter of Deuteronomy to the end of the 21st verse: And the third, from the beginning of the 37th verse of the xvth chapter of Numbers to the end of the chapter: And because the first of these portions, in the Hebrew Bible, begins with the word *Shema*, i. e. *hear*, therefore the reading of the whole is called *the reading of the Shema*, which, next to their saying of the *Shemoneh Eshreth*, or the famous *eighteen prayers*, is reckoned the most solemn part of their religious service.

The five books of the law were divided, as some say, by Moses himself, but not improbably by Ezra, into fifty-four sections, because in their intercalated years (when a month was added to the year), there were fifty-four Sabbaths, and so a section, being read every Sabbath day, completed the whole in the space of a year; but when the year was not thus intercalated, those who had the direction of the synagogue-worship reduced the sections to the number of Sabbaths, by joining two short ones several times into one, because they held themselves obliged to have the whole law, from the beginning of Genesis to the end of Deuteronomy read over in this manner every year.

In the persecution of Antiochus Epiphanes, when the reading of the law was prohibited, in the room of the fifty-four sections of it, the Jews substituted fifty-four sections of the prophets, which were ever after continued; insomuch, that when the reading of the law was again restored by the Maccabees, the section which was read every Sabbath out of the law, served for the first lesson, and the section out of the prophets for the second; for that is the meaning of (a) "St Paul's standing up to preach, after the reading of the law and the prophets:" i. e. after the reading of the first lesson out of the law, and the second lesson out of the prophets.

3. The exposition of the law and the prophets went along with the reading of them: For after that the Hebrew language had ceased to be the mother-tongue of the Jews, and the Chaldee grew up into use instead of it, the custom of the synagogue was, that one should first read a paragraph of the Scriptures to the people in the Hebrew tongue, and then another interpreted it in the Chaldee, which they better understood. And this seems to suggest the reason why these sections of Scripture came to be divided into verses, viz. that by this means the reader might certainly know how much he was to read; and the interpreter how much he was to interpret at every interval.

4. After that the reading and expounding were over, any person of learning and knowledge in the Scriptures might address himself to the people, upon what moral or Divine subject he thought proper; only we may observe, that this was a compliment usually paid to strangers; and therefore, when St Paul and his company came to Antioch in Pisidia, and went into the place of Divine worship on the Sabbath day, (b) "after the reading of the law and the prophets, the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them, saying, ye men and brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on."

From what has been said, it appears that the ministration of the synagogue service

(a) Acts xiii. 16.

(b) Ibid, 15.

A. M. 3475,
&c. or 4947.
Ant. Chris.
529, &c.
or 464.

was not confined to the sacerdotal order; for the priests were consecrated only to the service of the temple, which was widely different from this, as consisting chiefly in the offering up of sacrifices and oblations; but to this in the synagogue, any one, that by learning was qualified for it, was admitted. Only, for the preservation of order, there were in every synagogue some fixed officers, whose business it was to take care that all religious duties were therein decently performed.

The first of this kind are those whom the Scriptures in the New Testament call Ἀρχισυνάγωγοι, rulers of the synagogue: But how many of these belonged to each synagogue we cannot tell, only we may presume there were more than one, because they are mentioned in the (a) plural number in respect of the same synagogue. Next to them (and perhaps one of them) was the minister of the synagogue, whose business it was to offer up to God the public prayers of the congregation; and being for this purpose delegated (as it were) by them to God, is therefore, in the Hebrew language, called *Sheliach Zibber*, i. e. *the angel of the church*, or congregation; from whence the name of the bishops of the seven churches, mentioned in the Revelations, is manifestly borrowed. Next to this angel of the church were the deacons, and inferior ministers of the synagogue, called in Hebrew *Chazanim* or *overseers*, who, under the rulers of the synagogue, had the charge and oversight of all things in it, and kept the books of the Holy Scriptures, the liturgies, and utensils, which they brought forth and carried away again as there was occasion: And next to these overseers was the interpreter, whose office it was to recite in Chaldee the lessons (as they were read in Hebrew) to the congregation; and, because a good deal of skill in both languages was requisite for such an undertaking, whenever the rulers of the synagogue found a person fit for this purpose, they retained him by a salary, and so made him a standing minister among them.

We have nothing more to add concerning this synagogue-worship, but that the times appointed for it were three days a week besides their holidays, whether fasts or festivals, and thrice on every one of those days, i. e. in the morning, in the afternoon, and at night: and that, when at any of these times the blessing was to be given, if there was a priest present in the congregation he always did the office; but if there was none there, the *Sheliach Zibber*, who read the prayers in a form of benediction made proper for him, dismissed the people.

Before we dismiss this subject, there is one common inquiry which, by this time, we may be able to satisfy, and that is,—How it came to pass that the Jews were so prone to idolatry before the Babylonish captivity, and so strongly bent against it, (even to a degree of superstition) after that captivity was ended? which can hardly be imputed to any other cause, but that they had the law and the prophets every week read unto them, after that captivity, which they had not before. Before the captivity they had no synagogues for public worship or instruction, nor any places to resort to for these purposes, but either the temple at Jerusalem, or the cities of the Levites; and from hence great ignorance grew among the people: God was little known among them, and his laws in a manner wholly forgotten: and therefore, as occasions offered, they were easily drawn into all the superstitions and idolatrous practices of the heathen nations that lived about them. But now when, after the Babylonish captivity, synagogues were erected in every city, to which they constantly resorted for public worship, and where, every week, they had the law at first, and afterwards both the law and the prophets read to them; and where, by sermons and exhortations, they were at least every Sabbath-day instructed in their duty, and excited to the performance of it; this kept them in a thorough knowledge of God and his laws, as the comminations in the prophets (when once they came to be read among them) deterred them from transgressing against them; for (b) “All Scripture (as the apostle speaks) is given by inspiration of God, and

(a) Mark v. 35, &c. Luke viii. 41. xiii. 14.

(b) 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17.

is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God, or every man who resolves to be godly, may be perfect, wise unto salvation, and thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”

From Ezra, iv.
7. to the end;
all Est. Neh.
and part of
Hagg. Zech.
and Malachi.

One thing we may observe farther:—That since there was a public liturgy established in the Jewish church, and forms of prayer, though very empty and jejune in comparison of those that are in use among us; our blessed Saviour, when upon earth, was contented to join with the public in these forms, and to frequent the synagogue (a) every Sabbath-day. And this may inform us, that to break the union of a church upon the account of better edification, or more ecstatic prayers, is a refinement that the great Teacher of all righteousness knew nothing of. In the course of his preaching, he spared not to tell the Jews freely of all the corruptions that in his time they had run into; and therefore, had it been contrary to the will of God to use set forms of prayer in his public service, or had it been displeasing to him to be addressed in such mean forms when much better might have been made, we may be sure he would have told them both, and joined with them in neither: but since he never found fault with them for using set forms, but, on the contrary, taught his own disciples a set form to pray by, since he nowhere expressed a dislike of the forms then in use, upon account of their meanness, but, on the contrary, testified his approbation of them by joining with them in their synagogues; this should convince our separatists, one would think, that neither our using set forms of prayer in our public worship, nor the using of such as they think not sufficiently edifying, can be objections sufficient to justify them in their refusal to join with us in them, because, in both these cases, they have the example of Christ directly against them.

The truth is, whether there be a form or no form, or whether the form be elegantly or meanly composed, nothing of this availeth to the recommending of our prayers unto God. It is the true and sincere devotion of the heart alone that can make them acceptable unto him; for it is this only that gives life and vigour, and a true acceptance to all our religious addresses. Without this, how elegantly, how movingly, soever the prayer may be composed, and how fervently, how zealously, soever it may seem to be poured out, yet all this is dead matter, and of no validity in the presence of our God; but, on the contrary, the very heathens can tell us, that, be our prayers and oblations never so mean, they will be a “sacrifice of a sweet-smelling savour” unto him, if we bring but along with us to his worship,

Compositum jus fasque animo, sanctosque recessus
Mentis, et incoctum generoso pectus honesto:
Hæc cedo, ut admoveam templis, et farre litabo.

Pers. Sat. 2.

(a) Luke iv. 16.

CHAPTER III.

FROM THE DEATH OF NEHEMIAH TO THE DEATH OF
ANTIOCHUS EPIPHANES.

THE HISTORY.

A. M. 3596,
&c. or 5070.
Ant. Chris.
408, &c.
or 341.

MANASSEH, as Josephus calls him, (for we have now left the sacred history, and have nothing but the books of the Maccabees, Philo Judæus, and Josephus, with some fragments of the Greek and Latin writers, to depend on), being expelled from Jerusalem, with several others, who would not submit to Nehemiah's order for their parting with their idolatrous wives, went to Samaria (as we said before), and there put himself under the protection of Sanballat, his father-in-law; who, applying to Darius Nothus (the then king of Persia), did so far insinuate himself into his favour, as to obtain a grant for the building of a temple on Mount Gerizzim, near Samaria, and for making Manasseh, his son-in-law, the high priest of it*.

The Samaritans † were originally the Cutheans, and such other of the Eastern na-

* [The Sanballat, who built the temple on Mount Gerizzim, and constituted his son-in-law Manasseh high priest, was a different man, and lived at a different period, from him who disturbed Nehemiah when rebuilding Jerusalem. The disturber of Nehemiah was a *Horonite* or *Moabite*, who flourished in the reign of *Darius Nothus*; the Sanballat who built the temple on Gerizzim for his son-in-law Manasseh, was a *Cuthite*, sent to be governor of Samaria by *Darius Codomannus* the last king of Persia. Our author thinks it improbable that there should be two Sanballats in Samaria connected with the Jewish high priests by marriage; but such was the tendency of the high priests at that period to despise the law, and even to set the priesthood to sale, that there is no improbability whatever in this, if *Sanballat* was a common name at that period in Samaria. Indeed, whether it was or not, our conjectures must give place to the express testimony of Josephus, who says, that after the battle of *Granicus*, Sanballat renounced Darius, and taking with him seven thousand men, came to Alexander when commencing the siege of Tyre, and acknowledged him for his lord instead of Darius. Alexander receiving him kindly, was told by Sanballat that his son-in-law Manasseh was brother to the Jewish high

priest Jaddua; that he and his people were desirous to have a temple in some place within his own government; and that it would be for the conqueror's advantage to have the strength of the Jews (for he called the Samaritans Jews) divided. On this, Alexander gave Sanballat leave to build his temple on Mount Gerizzim, and to constitute his son-in-law high priest. *Josephus's* Antiq. lib. xi. cap. 8.]

† If we will believe their Chronicle, (which they tell us is of great antiquity, though others who have examined it, will not allow it to be as old as Constantine's days), they give us an account of their origin, quite different to what we gather from Sacred Writ. They pretend to be descended from Joseph by Ephraim in a direct line; and that when Joshua entered into the promised land, he caused a temple to be built upon Mount Gerizzim, and appointed one Buz, of the seed of Aaron, to officiate as high priest, from whom they have an exact genealogy and uninterrupted succession ever since. They neither own Jeroboam's schism, nor the transmigration of the ten tribes, but give this account of their leaving their country and returning to it again,—That when the kings of Jerusalem and Syria had revolted against Bactnezzar, (so they call Nebuchadnezzar), he came

tions, as Esarhaddon, after the deportation of the Israelites, planted there; but after this temple was built, and Samaria became a common refuge for all refractory Jews, this mixture of inhabitants in a short time produced a change in religion. For whereas they had hitherto worshipped the God of Israel, in conjunction with the gods of the East, from whence they came, when once the Jewish worship came to be settled among them, and the book of the law of Moses to be read publicly, they conformed themselves wholly to the worship of the true God, and, in their performance of this, were as exact as the Jews themselves. The Jews, however, looking on them as apostates, hated them to such a degree, as to avoid all manner of converse and communication with them. This hatred first began from the malice which the Samaritans expressed against them, both in the rebuilding of their temple and in the repairing of the walls of their city. It was afterwards much increased by the apostacy of Manasseh, and his setting up an altar and temple in opposition to those at Jerusalem; and it was all along kept up on account of some particular tenets, wherein the two nations were known to disagree. For the Samaritans received no other Scriptures than the five books of Moses; they rejected all traditions, and adhered only to the written word itself; and they maintained, that Mount Gerizzim †, whereon their temple was built, was the only proper place for the

From 1 Macc.
i. — vi. 7.
2. Macc. iii.—
x. and from
Jos. Hist. lib.
xi. c. 7. to
lib. xii. c. 14.

with an army and took Jerusalem, and thence marching to the Shechemites (for that is the name they give themselves), ordered them to leave their country in seven days, upon pain of military execution, which they readily did: That when he sent Persians to inhabit the cities which they had left, they could not live there, because the fruits which seemed fair to the eye were tainted with poison, and so destroyed them: That upon complaints of this, the king consulted with some of the ancient inhabitants of these provinces, who informed him, that the only remedy was to send the Hebrews back again into their own country; which when he consented to, a place was appointed for their general rendezvous: That when they came to this place, a dispute arose between them, whether they should go and rebuild the temple of Jerusalem or that of Gerizzim, and when Zerubbabel was for the former, and Sanballat for the latter, each pleading the sanction of the Pentateuch, and each pretending that the copy of his opponent was corrupt, they resolved to end the controversy by a fiery trial: That Zerubbabel's copy being thrown into the fire was immediately consumed, but that Sanballat's endured the flames three times together, and received no manner of harm; whereupon the king honoured the Shechemites with rich presents, and sent Sanballat as the head of the ten tribes to take possession of Mount Gerizzim. But who sees not that this whole history (full of falsities and absurdities as it is) was only invented to wipe off the shame and disgrace of the Samaritans, for being the offspring of proselytes, and a medley of foreign nations? *Basnage's History of the Jews*, lib. ii. c. 1. and *Universal History*, lib. ii. c. 1.

† Josephus, in his *Jewish Antiquities*, (lib. xiii. c. 6.) relates a dispute which arose in Egypt, in the reign of Ptolemy Philopater, between the Jews and Samaritans concerning their temples. The Samaritans maintained, that their temple upon Mount Gerizzim was the only true temple of the Lord; and the Jews, on the contrary, affirmed that theirs at Jerusa-

lem was the only true one. The dispute was brought before the king; advocates on both sides were named; and it was agreed, that they who did not make their allegations good should be condemned to death. Both parties promised that they would produce all their testimonies from the law only. Andronicus, advocate for the Jews, spake first, and proved so very evidently from the Scriptures the antiquity of the temple of Jerusalem, the succession of the high priests, and the value which the Asiatic princes always had for that holy place, while at the same time they never so much as thought of the temple at Gerizzim, that the king and his assessors declared he had carried his cause, and ordered Sabbæus and Theodosius, the advocates for the Samaritans, to be put to death. Whether there be any reality in this account of Josephus or no, it is certain that the Samaritans, in behalf of Mount Gerizzim, have to plead,—That there Abraham (Gen. xii. 6, 7. and xiii. 4.) and there Jacob (Gen. xxxiii. 20.) built altars unto God, and by their offering up sacrifices thereon, consecrated that place above all others to his worship; that for this reason God himself appointed it (Deut. xxvii. 12.) to be the hill of blessing; and that accordingly Joshua, on his entrance upon the land of Canaan, caused the blessings of God, to such as would observe his laws, from hence to be pronounced; and, lastly, that when he passed the Jordan, he built here an altar of the twelve stones which he took out of the river in his passage, Deut. xxvii. 2—7. according to what God had commanded him by Moses. But herein the Samaritans are guilty of a great prevarication; for they have changed the words in the text of Deuteronomy, and instead of Mount Ebal (as it is in the original) have put Mount Gerizzim, the better to serve their cause. The truth of the matter is, since Manasseh was resolved to make a schism in the Jewish church, and Sanballat to build a temple for him, the reasons above-mentioned might be inducement enough for them to make choice of that place rather than any other; but from thence to pretend to vie with the

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&c. or 5070.
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or 341.

worship of God; and from this variety of causes did ensue all the hatred and virulence which in the course of this history we shall have but too frequent occasion to take notice of.

After the death of Nehemiah, who was the last governor that the kings of Persia sent to Jerusalem, Judea, being added to the Prefecture of Syria, was from thenceforward subjected to the rulers of that province; and under them the administration of all public affairs, both civil and ecclesiastical, was committed to the high priest, which made that office much more coveted than it used to be, and many times tempted those who had no right to it to invade it.

Upon the death of Darius Nothus, Artaxerxes, who, for his extraordinary memory, is by the Greeks called *Μνήμων*, or, The Remembrancer, succeeded his father in the throne of Persia; and, towards the latter end of his reign, made Bagoses governor of Syria and Phœnicia, who took upon him to confer the pontificate, even while Johanan the high priest (who had been several years invested with it) was alive, upon the high priest's brother Joshua, and who accordingly came with this grant to Jerusalem, in order to take possession of the office. (a) But, while the one endeavoured by force to get possession, and the other by force to keep him from it, it so happened that Johanan slew Joshua in the inner court of the temple; which when Bagoses heard, he came in great wrath to Jerusalem; went into the temple, notwithstanding the remonstrances that were made against it; and, having taken a thorough cognizance of the fact, imposed a mulct for the punishment of it, and obliged the priests to pay, out of the public treasury, for every lamb that they offered in the daily sacrifice *, the sum of fifty drams, which is about one pound, eleven shillings, and threepence of our money.

After the death of Artaxerxes *Μνήμων*, Ochus succeeded his father, but obtained the crown *² by very wicked and indirect means. He reigned however for one and twenty

temple at Jerusalem, is highly arrogant; because the Jews have authentic testimonies, that the public exercise of the true religion was settled among them, and solemnized at Jerusalem long before this temple at Gerizzim was thought of. In short, the religious observances of the Jewish worship did always attend the ark of the covenant, but the ark was never once at Gerizzim, nor indeed was it fixed in any settled place, until David took it to his palace at Jerusalem, and Solomon had built a temple for it in the same city. *Prideaux's Connection*, anno 409, and *Calmet's Dictionary* under the word *Gerizzim*.

(a) *Jewish Antiq.* lib. xi. c. 7.

* This, if extended only to the ordinary sacrifices, which were offered every day, amounted to 365,000 drachms for the whole year, which is no more than one thousand one hundred and forty pounds, twelve shillings, and sixpence of our money: But if it extended also to the extraordinary sacrifices which on solemn days were added to the ordinary, it will come to about half as much more. For the ordinary sacrifices which were offered every day, and therefore called the daily sacrifices, were a lamb in the morning and another in the evening, which are called the morning and evening sacrifices; and these in the whole year came to seven hundred and thirty. But besides these, there were added on every Sabbath two lambs more, Numb. xxviii. 9, 10: on every new moon seven, Numb. xxviii. 11. on each of the seven days of the paschal solemnity seven, Numb. xxviii. 16—24. besides one more on the second day, when the wave-

sheaf was offered, Lev xxiii. 12. on the day of Pentecost seven, ver. 17, 18. on the feast of trumpets seven, Numb. xxviii. 27. on the great day of expiation seven, chap. xxix. 8. on each of the seven days of the feast of tabernacles fourteen, chap. xxix. 13. and on the eighth day seven, Numb. xxix. 36 so that the additional lambs being three hundred seventy and one, these, if reckoned to the other, make the whole number annually offered at the morning and evening sacrifices to be eleven hundred and one: and therefore, if the mulct of fifty drachms a lamb were paid for them all, it would make the whole of it to amount to 55,050 drachms, which comes to seventeen hundred and twenty pounds, six shillings, and threepence of our money. But even this sum being too small for a national mulct, it seems most probable that all the lambs which were offered in the temple, in any sacrifice, and upon any account whatever, were taken into the reckoning. We may observe, however, that whatever this mulct was, the payment of it lasted no longer than seven years; for, on the death of Artaxerxes, the changes and revolutions which then happened in the empire, made a change in the government of Syria, and he that succeeded Bagoses in that province no farther exacted it. *Prideaux's Connection*, Anno 366.

*² Artaxerxes, when he died, left three sons, Ariaspes, Ochus, and Arsames. Ariaspes was an easy, credulous prince; and therefore Ochus so terrified him with menaces, which he pretended came from his father, that, for fear of being put to death, he poisoned

years, after which (a) he was poisoned by his favourite eunuch * Bagoas, who put the crown upon the head of Arsēs, his youngest son; but, in a short time, dispatched him likewise, and made Codomannus, (b) one of the same family, but at some distance, and who upon his accession took the name of Darius, king of Persia.

From 1 Macc.
i. — vi. 7.
2 Macc. iii. —
x. and From
Jos. Hist. lib.
xi. c. 7. to
lib. xii c. 14.

In the third year of the reign of Ochus, about three hundred and fifty-six years before the birth of Christ, Alexander the Great, who overthrew the Persian empire, was born at Pella in Macedonia. His father Philip had been chosen captain-general of all Greece (which at this time made a very considerable figure in history) for carrying on the war against Persia; but when he was just ready to set forward upon that expedition *², he was slain at home, while he was celebrating the marriage of Cleopatra, his daughter, with Alexander king of Epirus.

Upon his death, Alexander his son succeeded him in the kingdom of Macedon, when he was twenty years old; and (c) having been chosen (as his father was) to command the Grecian forces against Persia, he took the field, and, in one campaign only, over-run almost all Asia Minor; vanquished Darius in two pitched battles; took his mother, wife, and children, prisoners; and having subdued all Syria, came to Tyre; but there he met with a stop: For the Tyrians *³ (in confidence of the strength of the place, and of assistance from their allies), when he would have entered the city denied him admittance.

While his army was besieging Tyre, he sent out his commissioners, requiring the inhabitants of the neighbouring countries, viz. of Galilee, Samaria, and Judea, to submit to him, and to furnish him with what he wanted. Other provinces complied; but the Jews, pleading their oath to Darius, by which they thought themselves bound not to acknowledge any new master so long as he was alive, refused to obey his commands. This exasperated the conqueror not a little; who, † in the flush of his many successes,

himself. Arsames he caused to be assassinated by Harpates; and this loss, added to the other, so overwhelmed the old king with grief, that he broke his heart and died. *Prideaux's Connection*, Anno 359.

(a) *Diodorus Siculus*, lib. xvii.

* This eunuch, having poisoned both Ochus and his son Arsēs, set the crown upon Darius's head; but, finding that he would not answer his purpose in permitting him to govern all in his name (which was the thing he aimed at in his advancement), he was resolved to have removed him in the same manner as he had done his predecessors, and accordingly had provided a poisonous potion for him. But Darius being advised of the design, when the potion was brought to him, made him drink it all himself, and so got rid of the traitor by his own artifice. *Prideaux's Connection*, Anno 335.

(b) *Diodorus Siculus*, lib. xvii.

*² The occasion of his death is said to be this:—Pausanius, a young noble Macedonian, and one of his guards, having had his body forced, and sodomically abused by Attalus the chief of the king's confidants, had often complained to Philip of the injury; but, finding no redress, he turned his revenge from the author of the injury upon him who refused to do him justice for it, and slew him as he was passing in great state to the theatre, having the images of the twelve gods and goddesses and his own, in the same pompous habit, carried before him. Hereby he arrogated to himself the honour of a god; but being slain as soon as his image entered the theatre, he gave a

signal proof that he was no more than a mere mortal man. *Justin*, lib. 9.; *Diodorus Siculus*, lib. 16.

(c) *Justin*, lib. 11. c. 2.

*³ The city of Tyre is probably supposed to have been first built by a colony of the Sidonians, and therefore the prophet Isaiah, chap. xxxiii. 12. calls it "the daughter of Zidon." It was at first situated on an high hill on the continent, whose ruins are still remaining under the name of Palætyrus, or Old Tyre; but in process of time it was removed into an adjacent rocky island, about half a mile from the main land, and became a place of so great trade and wealth, that, according to the forementioned prophet, "her merchants were princes, and her traffickers the honourable of the earth," ver. 8. It had once been taken and destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar; but when Alexander came before it, it had quite recovered itself, and was fortified with a strong wall (drawn round it on the brink of the sea) of an hundred and fifty feet in height; so that he had no way of approaching it, in order to make an assault, but by carrying a bank from the continent, through the sea, to the island on which the city stood, which in seven months time he accomplished, and at length took the place. *Prideaux's Connection*, Anno 333.

† No sooner was he chose general of all the Grecian cities confederated against the Persian empire, but he subdued the Tyrians and Triballians in Thrace; and upon his return took Thebes, that had revolted from the confederacy, and razed it to the ground. After this, setting out upon the Persian expedition,

A. M. 3596, could bear no contradiction, and therefore, as soon as he had done with Tyre, * he &c. or 5070. marched directly against Jerusalem.

Ant. Chris.
408, &c.
or 341.

(a) Jaddua, the high priest, who at this time had the chief government of the Jews under the king of Persia, was in dreadful apprehensions of what the event might prove. But having no protection to depend on but God's, he, and all Jerusalem with him, made their cries and supplications to him, imploring his mercy for their deliverance from the approaching storm; whereupon he was ordered, in a vision of the night, to go out and meet Alexander (whenever he should come) in his pontifical robes, with the priests attending him in their proper habits, and all the people in white garments.

Jaddua, next day, with the priests and people, habited in the manner directed, went out of the city to a certain eminence which commanded the prospect of all the country round, and there waited the coming of Alexander. As soon as the high priest saw him at some distance, he moved towards him in this solemn pomp; which struck the king with such an awe, that as he drew near he bowed down to him, and saluted him with a religious veneration, to the great surprise of all that attended him.

While every one stood amazed at this behaviour, Parmenio, his first favourite, took the freedom to ask him, How it came to pass that he, whom all mankind adored, paid such adoration to the Jewish high priest? To which his reply was, "That he did not pay that adoration to him, but to the God whose high priest he was; that while he was at Dio in Macedonia, and deliberating with himself how to carry on the war with Persia, that very person, and in that very habit, appeared to him in a dream, encouraging him to pass boldly over into Asia, and not to doubt of success, because God would be his guide in the expedition, and give him the empire of the Persians; and that therefore, from hence he was assured, that he made the present war under the conduct of that God, to whom, in the person of this high-priest, he paid adoration:" And hereupon turning to Jaddua again, he embraced him very kindly: And so going into the city with him, offered sacrifices to God in the temple, where the high priest shewed him the prophecies of Daniel *², predicting the overthrow of the Persian empire by a Gre-

he vanquished Darius near the Granicus; and after the action took Sardis, Ephesus, Miletum, and Halicarnassus. The next year he made himself master of all Phrygia, Lycia, Pamphylia, Pisidia, Paphlagonia, and Cappadocia. The next year he gave Darius a second defeat (and a terrible one it was) at Issus; took his mother, wife, two daughters, and a young son, prisoners; seized Damascus, and in it immense riches; subdued, in short, all Syria, Cælo-Syria, and Phœnicia: For every place yielded to him, none pretending to make any resistance till he came to Tyre. *Prideaux's Connection, Anno 333.*

* As soon as he had taken the town, he burnt it down to the ground, and destroyed and enslaved all the inhabitants. Eight thousand he slew in the sackage of the town, and two thousand of those whom he took prisoners he caused to be crucified; a piece of cruelty this highly unbecoming a generous conqueror. But to palliate the matter, he gave out, that it was done by way of just revenge upon them, for their murdering their masters, and that, being originally but slaves, crucifixion was the proper punishment for them. But this depended upon an old story. Some ages before, the slaves of Tyre, having made a conspiracy against their masters, murdered them all in one night (except only Strato, whom his slave secretly saved), and, having married their mistresses, continued masters of the town, and from them the pre-

sent Tyrians were descended. So that Alexander pretended, on this occasion, to revenge on them the murder that was committed by their progenitors so many ages before; though, in reality, it was to gratify his rage for being so long detained before the place, and there so valiantly resisted. Recovering however its beauty and riches again, it was invested with the privileges of a Roman city for its fidelity, and, in the flourishing times of Christianity, was the metropolitan see of the province of Phœnicia. But now that it is fallen into the hands of the Turks, there is not the least similitude of that glory for which it was once renowned. Its present inhabitants are only a few poor wretches, harbouring themselves in vaults (for there is not one entire house left), subsisting chiefly upon fishing, and preserved in this place, as it were, by Providence, for a visible argument of God's having fulfilled his word concerning Tyre, viz. "That it should be as the top of a rock, a place for fishers to dry their nets on," Ezek. xxvi. 14. *Justin, lib. xviii. c. 3. Prideaux's Connection, Anno 333, and Maundrell's Journey from Aleppo to Jerusalem.*

(a) *Joseph. lib. xi. c. 8.*

*² Viz. What is written of the ram and the he-goat, chap. viii. where that he-goat is interpreted to be the king of Grecia, who should conquer the Medes and Persians, ver. 20. As likewise what is written by the same prophet, of the same Grecian king, chap. xi. 3.;

cian king, which he applied to himself, and thereby confirmed his opinion, that God had chosen him to execute this great work.

When he left Jerusalem, he offered to grant the people whatever immunities the high priest should desire; but he requested no more than a toleration to live according to their own laws and religion, and an exemption from the payment of tribute every seventh year, because, on the Sabbatical year, the Jews were forbidden to till their ground. This he readily consented to; and having signified his pleasure, that if any of them were minded to list in his troops he would readily receive them, great multitudes did hereupon offer their service, and followed him in his other expeditions.

(a) No sooner was he well got out of the city, but the Samaritans met him in great pomp and parade, desiring of him that he would likewise honour their city and temple with his presence. "He was then hastening to Egypt, he told them, but that when he returned, if his affairs would permit him, he would not fail to comply with their desires." And when they requested of him an immunity from all taxes every seventh year, because they (as well as the Jews) did every seventh year suffer their land to lie fallow, he asked them if they were Jews, because to them only he had granted that privilege. Their answer was, that they were Hebrews, but that the Phœnicians called them Sichemites: Whereupon, having no leisure to make any farther enquiry into the matter, he referred this likewise to his return, when he promised to examine into their pretensions, and to do them justice; but before his return they had done enough to incense him against them.

On his going from these parts into Egypt, he had made Andromachus, a special favourite of his, governor of Syria and Palestine; who, (b) coming to Samaria in order to settle some affairs, was burnt to death in his house, which the people set on fire, out of rage and discontent, very probably, that the privileges which were granted to their enemies the Jews were denied to them. This barbarous action exasperated Alexander not a little; insomuch, that having caused those who had acted any part in the murder of the governor to be put to death, he drove all the rest of the inhabitants out of Samaria, planted therein a colony of Macedonians, and gave the rest of their territories to the Jews.

After the death of Alexander * (who did not long survive the unfortunate Da-

for both these prophecies foretold the destruction of the Persian king. *Prideaux's Connection*, Anno 333.

(a) *Joseph. lib. xi. c. 8.*

(b) *Quint. Curt. lib. iv. c. 8.*

* It is not well agreed among historians how this great conqueror of the world died. Some of them are of opinion, that he was poisoned by the procurement of Antipater, whom he had left governor of all his dominions in his absence, and who, for his maladministration, had been lately dismissed; and therefore, fearing to be called to an account, did, by the hands of his sons, who were about the person of the king, and one of them his cup-bearer, execute this treason upon his master's life, in order to save his own. But in the judgment of other historians, he died by nothing but excessive drinking; and thus they relate the story: "One day, after he had been sacrificing to the gods for the many victories which he had obtained, he made an entertainment for his friends, wherein he drank very hard, and continued the debauch till late at night; when, returning from the feast, he and his company were invited by a physician of Thessalia to come and drink a little more at his house. Alexander accepted of the offer: And as

there were twenty in company, he first drank to each of them in their order, and so pledged them again, and then called for the Herculean cup. There was in company one Prodeas, a Macedonian, but a terrible drinker, and to him the king drank this Herculean brim-full (which they tell us held six of our quarts), and not long after pledged him in the same; but immediately after the second cup, he dropped down upon the place, and then fell into a violent fever, of which he died, in the thirty-third year of his age, after a reign of twelve years, six years as king of Macedon, and six more as monarch of Asia." He was a man of a bold enterprising spirit, but fuller of fire than discretion. His actions, though they were attended with success, were carried on with a furious and extravagant rashness; and the few virtues that he had were obscured with much greater vices. Vain-glory was the predominant passion of his soul, and the fables of the ancient Greek heroes the only charts by which he steered his conduct. This was the reason that he dragged Betis round the walls of Gaza, in the same manner as Achilles had used Hector; that he undertook that hazardous expedition into India, as Hercules had done before him; that he made a

From 1 Macc.
i. — vi. 7.
2 Macc. iii. —
x. and From
Jos. Hist. lib.
xi. c. 7. to
lib. xii. c. 14.

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&c. or 5070.
Ant. Chris.
408, &c.
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rius *), the Grecian or Macedonian empire (for so it was now become) was divided among the chief commanders of his army, who soon fell to leaguings and fighting against each other, till after some years they were all destroyed except four, and these agreed to make a partition of the whole among themselves, and so cantoned it into four kingdoms, though all this while Aridæus, *² a bastard brother of Alexander's, that took upon him the name of Philip, and after him Alexander Ægus, his own son by his wife Roxana, bore both of them the title of kings.

In this division, Ptolemy, the son of Lagus, whom the Greeks call Soter, having taken possession of Egypt, thought that the provinces of Syria, Phœnicia, and Judea, would be an excellent barrier for him; and therefore (a) he first of all attempted to bribe Laomedon, a Mitylenian captain of Alexander's (who, after the death of Andromachus, very probably was made governor of Syria and the adjacent countries), with a vast sum of money, to deliver them up into his hands: But not being able to prevail this way, he sent Nicanor, one of his captains, with an army into Syria, whilst himself with a fleet invaded Phœnicia; and so having vanquished Laomedon and taken him prisoner, he made himself master of all these provinces.

(b) The Jews, however, for some time stood out against him, and, upon account of the oath they had taken to the deposed governor, refused to submit to his authority. Hereupon he marched into Judea, and having got possession of most of the country, laid siege to Jerusalem. The place was strong enough, both by nature and art, to have made

drunken procession through Caramania, because Bacchus is said to have done the like in the same place; and that he affected to be called the son of Jupiter, because most of the ancient heroes pretended that they had for their fathers one god or other. The truth is, this young conqueror having the Iliads of Homer in great admiration, always carried them with him, laid them under his pillow when he slept, and read in them on all leisure opportunities; and therefore, finding Achilles to be the great hero in that poem, he thought every thing said of him worthy of imitation, and the readiest way to become an hero himself, which was the main impulsive cause of all his undertakings: But, in reality, were his actions to be duly estimated, he could deserve no other character than that of the great cut-throat of the age in which he lived. The folly of mankind, however, and the error of historians is such, that they usually make the actions of war, bloodshed, and conquest, the subjects of their highest encomiums, and those their most celebrated heroes that most excel in these; whereas, those only are the true heroes who most benefit the world by promoting the peace and welfare of mankind. In a righteous cause indeed, and the just defence of a man's country, all actions of valour are just reasons of praise; but in all other cases, victory and conquest are no more than murder and rapine; and those who thus oppress the world with the slaughter of men, the desolation of countries, the burning of cities, and the other calamities which attend war, are the scourges of God, the Attilas of the age in which they live, and the greatest plagues and calamities that happen to it; and therefore, to make these the subject of praise and panegyric, is to lay ill examples before princes, as if such oppressions of mankind were the truest ways to honour and glory. *Diod. Sic. lib. xvii. Arrian, lib. vii. Justin, lib. xii. Q. Curt. lib. x. Plutarch, in Alexandro, and Prideaux's Connection,*

Anno 328. 332.

* After the battle of Arbela, wherein he was sore discomfited, he made his escape into Media, and having got some few forces together, thought to have tried his fate in one battle more; when Bessus, his governor of Bactria, and Nabazanes, another Persian nobleman, conspired together, and having seized the poor king and made him their prisoner, put him in chains and shut him up in a close cart, and so carried him with them towards Bactria, intending, if Alexander pursued them, to purchase their peace by delivering him up into his hands; but if he did not, to kill him and seize his kingdom, and so renew the war. Alexander having heard what these traitors had done, made all the haste he could to rescue Darius out of their hands; but when, after several days march, he came up with them, (because Darius refused to mount on horseback, for his more speedy flight with them) they gave him several mortal wounds, and left him dying in the cart. He was dead before Alexander came; but when he saw his corpse, he could not forbear shedding tears at so melancholy a spectacle: And having cast his cloak over it, he ordered that it should be wrapt up therein, and carried to his mother Sisymbria at Sushan, (where he had left her with the other captive ladies) to be buried there with a royal funeral (for which himself allowed the expence) in the sepulchres of the kings of Persia. *Prideaux's Connection, Anno 330.*

*² Aridæus, with his wife Euridice, was put to death by Olympias, the mother of Alexander the Great, after he had borne the title of king for six years and seven months; and Alexander Ægus, with his mother Roxana, after a long imprisonment in the castle of Amphipolis, was, in like manner, murdered by Cassander, to make way for himself to the crown of Macedon. (a) *Diod. Sic. lib. xviii. Plutarch, in Demetrio.* (b) *Jewish Antiq. lib. xii. c. 1.*

a considerable defence against him; but the Jews had then such a superstitious notion for the observation of the Sabbath, that they thought it a breach of their law even to defend themselves on it: Which when Ptolemy understood, he made choice of that day to storm the place, and in the assault took it, because there were none that would defend the walls against him. At first he dealt hardly with the inhabitants, and carried above an hundred thousand of them captives into Egypt; but afterwards considering how faithful they had been to their former governors, he employed them in his army and garrisons, and granted them large immunities and privileges; whereupon the whole nation of the Jews became subject to the power and dominion of the kings of Egypt.

In the fifth year of this Ptolemy's reign, Onias, the Jewish high priest, died, and was succeeded by Simon his son, who, from the holiness of his life, and the great righteousness which shone forth in all his actions, was called Simon the Just. He continued in his office for nine years, in which time he did many beneficial acts * both for the church and state of the Jews; but what is chiefly commemorated of him is his completing the canon of the Scriptures of the Old Testament. What Ezra (*a*), and the men of the great synagogue, who (as some say) assisted him, did in this work, we have taken sufficient notice of before. The books of Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, and Malachi, as well as the two Chronicles of the kings of Judah and Israel, could not possibly be inserted by Ezra himself, because some of these books claim him for their author, and in others there are some particulars which refer to times as low as Alexander the Great, and therefore a later time must be assigned for their reception into the canon. And if so, there seems to be none so proper as that when the men of the great synagogue, who, under the direction and presidency of Simon the Just, were employed in this work, ceased to be.

Simon was succeeded in the pontificate by his brother Eleazar, (for his son Onias was but a minor when he died); and, upon the death of Ptolemy Soter, his son Ptolemy Philadelphus succeeded in the throne of Egypt, and pursued his father's example in continuing the musæum †, or college of learned men, which he had erected, and in augmenting the noble library †² which he had left behind him at Alexandria. To this

* The commendation which the author of Ecclesiasticus gives us of this high priest, is thus expressed: "He, in his life-time, repaired the house again, and in his days fortified the temple. By him was built, from the foundation, the double height, the high fortress of the wall above the temple. In his days, the cistern to receive water, being in compass as the sea, was covered with plates of brass. He took care of the temple that it should not fall, and fortified the city against besieging. How was he honoured amidst the people, in his coming out of the sanctuary? He was as the morning star in the midst of a cloud, and as the moon at the full, or the sun shining upon the temple of the Most High, and as a rainbow giving light in the bright clouds:—When he put on the robe of honour, and was clothed with the perfection of glory, and when he went up to the holy altar, he made the garments of holiness honourable. Ecclus. l. 1, 2, &c.

(*a*) *Introd. and Dissert. II.* subjoined to the preceding book.

† This was a large edifice in Alexandria, which stood in that quarter of the city called Brachium, and was designed for the habitation of such learned men as made it their study to improve philosophy and all useful knowledge, like that of the Royal Society at London, and the Royal Academy of Sciences at Paris. This building, which was not far distant from

the palace, was surrounded with a portico or piazza, where the philosophers walked and conversed, and had in it a common hall, where they used to eat together. The members of this society were under the government of a president, whose office was of that consideration and dignity, that, during the reign of the Ptolemies, he was always constituted by those kings, and afterwards by the Roman emperors. The revenues appointed for the maintenance of this college, from the first foundation of it, were large. From it did proceed men of very excellent literature; and to it was owing that Alexandria, for a great many ages together, was the greatest school of learning in all those parts of the world; until, in the war which the Alexandrians had with Aurelian the Roman emperor, all that quarter of the city where the museum stood was destroyed, and with it this college of learned men dissolved. *Prideaux's Connection*, Anno 285.

†² This library was at first placed in the museum; but when it was filled with books to the number of four hundred thousand volumes, there was another library erected within the Serapeum (or the famous temple where the image of Serapis was set up), which increased in time to the number of three hundred thousand volumes; and these two put together, made up the number of seven hundred thousand volumes in the whole, of which the Royal Libraries of the Ptole-

From 1 Macc.
i. — vi. 7.
2 Macc. iii.—
x. and From
Jos. Hist. lib.
xi. c. 7. to
lib. xii. c. 14.

A. M. 3596,
&c. or 5070.
Ant. Chris.
408, &c.
or 341.

purpose, hearing that the Jews had among them a famous book, viz. "the book of their law," which well deserved a place among his collection, he sent to Eleazar * the high priest, to desire an authentic copy of it: and, because it was wrote in a language that he did not understand, he desired him at the same time to send a competent number of learned men, well versed in both the Hebrew and Greek tongues, who out of the former might translate it for him into the latter. This Eleazar failed not to do; and from the joint labours of the LXX, or rather LXXII translators that were employed in the work, the version has ever since gone under the name of the Septuagint *².

mean kings at Alexandria are said to consist. Their manner of collecting them was not so very honourable; for whatever books were brought by any foreigner into Egypt, these they seized, and sending them to the museum (where they maintained people for that purpose), they caused them to be transcribed, and then sent the copies to the owners, but laid up the originals in the library. When Julius Cæsar waged war with the Alexandrians, it so happened, that the library in the Brachium was burnt, and the four hundred thousand volumes that were laid up there were all consumed. But that of the Scrapeum still remained, and soon grew up to be larger, and of more eminent note than the former; but at length, in the year of our Lord 642, when the Saracens made themselves masters of the city, they totally destroyed it. For when the general of the army wrote to Omar, who was then the Caliph or emperor of the Saracens, to know his pleasure concerning it, his answer was, "That if these books contained what was agreeing with the Alcoran, there was no need of them, because the Alcoran alone was sufficient for all truth; but if they contained what was disagreeing with it, they were not to be endured." And therefore he ordered, that, whatsoever the contents of them were, they should all be destroyed. *Prideaux's Connection*, anno 285.

* Josephus has given us both Ptolemy's letter to Eleazar, and Eleazar's answer at large; but whether these pieces are genuine or no, is a matter of some dispute among the learned. They are too long, however, to be here inserted, but the substance of the letter is,—“That both Ptolemy and his father had been extremely kind to the Jews; his father, in placing them in offices of trust, and himself in redeeming great numbers of them from slavery, and employing several of them both in his court and camp; and that, as a farther testimony of his kindness to them, he proposed to make a translation of their law into the Greek language, for which he desired them to send a proper number of such men as he knew were qualified for the undertaking.” In answer to which, Eleazar acknowledges the receipt of his most gracious letter, and of the valuable presents which he had sent; and, in return, promises, that the people should not fail to pray to God daily for the protection of his person, and the prosperity of his royal family, and that, pursuant to his command, he had sent an authentic copy of the law, and six men out of each tribe to assist in the translation of it. *Jewish Hist.* lib. xii. c. 2.

* [The history of the Septuagint version of the Old Testament is universally known, for it is related by various ancient authors, who all agree that it was made by the command of *Philadelphus*, and under the

care of *Demetrius Phalereus* his librarian, and the most learned man of the age. There is not one Christian writer before the year 1500, who has occasion to speak of this translation, who does not say that it was made by seventy interpreters from an authentic copy of the Hebrew Scriptures sent by the high priest from Jerusalem to Ptolemy Philadelphus. They differ indeed in several circumstances respecting the manner in which the translation was made; but with respect to the time and the number of the translators employed, both Jews and Christians were agreed till after the period that has been mentioned. In this case, however, as in others of equal importance, the fables that have been engrafted on the truth have induced many critics of eminence to call in question the whole narrative, as well of *Josephus*, who was himself a Jewish priest, and *Aristobulus* an Egyptian Jew, who was tutor to an Egyptian king, and flourished within 100 years of the period at which he says the translation was made, or of the pretended and fabulous *Aristeas*. The principal opponents to the common opinion of the origin of the Septuagint version are *Dupin*, *Dr Hody*, *Le Clerc*, and *Dr Prideaux*; and their arguments against that opinion have been fairly and candidly stated, and, as it appears to me, completely refuted by *Dr Brett* in a *Dissertation on the ancient versions of the Bible*, which was published, first in 1742, afterwards in 1760, and again by the late Bishop of Landaff in the third volume of his valuable collection of *Theological Tracts*. It is, as his Lordship justly terms it, “an excellent Dissertation, and cannot fail of being very useful to such as have not leisure or opportunity to consult *Dr Hody's* book *de Bibliorum Textibus*; Bishop *Walton's* Prolegomena to the Polyglot, *Du Pin's* canon of the Scripture; Dean *Prideaux's* account of the Hebrew Scriptures in the 2d vol. 8vo. of the Old and New Testament connected; the 2d book of *Lamy's Apparatus Bibliicus*; *Lewis's Origenes Hebrææ*, and other works of the like nature.” It may indeed be useful to those who have read all these works; and will leave, I think, no doubt on the mind of the candid reader, that a Greek version of the law *certainly*, and of the other books of the Old Testament *probably*, was made from an authentic copy sent from Jerusalem to Ptolemy Philadelphus. *Dr Brett* accounts likewise in a very satisfactory manner for the principal differences that are found between the present *Masoretic* Hebrew text and the Septuagint version, as well as for the various readings that have crept into both, and has said enough to make every Biblical scholar long for a completion of that edition of the *Septuagint*, which was begun several years ago in Oxford.]

After the death of Ptolemy Philadelphus *, his son Euergetes came to the crown of Egypt, and Onias succeeded his uncle (though not immediately) in the pontificate. He was the son of Simon the Just; but in many things the very reverse to his father. At the best, he was but a weak and inconsiderate man; (a) but being now grown very old, and very covetous, he took no care to pay Ptolemy Euergetes the annual tribute of twenty talents which his predecessors used to do; so that when the arrears were swelled to a large sum, the king sent one Athenion, an officer of his court, to Jerusalem, to demand the full payment of the money, upon peril of having an army sent among them to dispossess them of their country.

(b) Onias had a nephew by his sister's side, whose name was Joseph, a young man of great reputation among the Jews, for prudence, justice, and sanctity of life. He, as soon as he heard of the message which Athenion had brought, and of the people's great consternation thereupon, went immediately to his uncle, and severely upbraided him with his ill management of the public interest, who, for the lucre of a little money, had exposed the whole nation to such imminent danger, which now there was no way to avoid, (as he told him) but by his going immediately to the Egyptian court, and, by a timely application to the king there, endeavouring to pacify his wrath.

The bare mentioning of a journey to Alexandria *² so terrified the high priest, that

* After the death of his beloved wife Arsinoe, Ptolemy did not long survive her: For, being of a tender constitution himself, and having farther weakened it by a luxurious indulgence, he could not bear the approach of age, or the grief of mind which he fell under upon this occasion; but sinking under these burdens, he died in the sixty-third year of his life, after he had reigned in Egypt 38 years. As he was a learned prince himself, and a great patron of learning, many of those who were eminent for any part of literature resorted to him from all parts, and partook of his favour and bounty. Seven celebrated poets of that age are said to have lived at his court; four of which, viz. Theocritus, Callimachus, Lycophron, and Aratus, have their works still remaining; and among these, the first of them has a whole Idyllium, and the second, part of two hymns written in his praise. Manetho, the Egyptian historian, dedicated his history to him; and Zoilus, the snarling critic, came also to his court. But how great soever his wit was, he could never recommend himself to king Ptolemy, who hated him for the bitterness and ill-nature of it: And, for the same reason, having drawn on himself the odium and aversion of all men, he at length died miserably; for some say that he was stoned, others, that he was burnt to death, and others again, that he was crucified by king Ptolemy for a crime that deserved that punishment. *Prideaux's Connection*, Anno 249.

(a) *Jewish Antiq.* lib. xii. c. 3.

(b) *Ibid.* lib. xii. c. 4.

*² This city, which was built by Alexander the Great, A. M. 3673, (according to Hales 5080) was, after his death, made the capital of Egypt by Ptolemy and his successors for almost three hundred years. Dinocrates (who rebuilt the temple of Diana at Ephesus, after it had been burnt by Erostratus) was the architect who drew the plan of it, and had the chief direction of the work; but, to have it carried on with more expedition, Alexander appointed Cleomenes,

one of his captains, to be the surveyor of it, and for this reason, Justin, lib. xiii. c. 4. calls him the founder of it. The happy situation of this city, between the Mediterranean and the Red Sea, and upon the river Nile, drew thither the commerce of the East and West, and made it in a very little time one of the most flourishing cities in the world. It has still some small repute for merchandise; but what has occasioned the decay of its trade, is the discovery of the passage to the East Indies by the Cape of Good Hope, or on the south of Afric. Before this discovery the whole spice-trade was carried into this part of the world through this city; for the spices were brought from the East Indies up the Red Sea to Egypt, and from thence were carried by land on camels to Alexandria. When Egypt became a province of the Roman empire, this city continued the metropolis of it; and when the Arabians took it, which was about 640 years after Christ, there were four thousand palaces still standing in it, four thousand bag-nios, forty thousand Jews paying tribute, four hundred squares, and twelve thousand persons that sold herbs and fruit. Here, as we said, was the famous Serapeum, or temple of Serapis, for beauty of workmanship, and magnificence of structure, inferior to nothing but the Roman capitol. Here was the museum, or college of philosophers; and here that noble library, which was erected by Ptolemy Philadelphus, but unhappily burnt in the war between Cæsar and Pompey. But notwithstanding all its former splendour and magnificence, this city is now become a poor village, (by the Egyptians called Rachot) without any thing remarkable in it, except its ruins, and the remains of its former grandeur; only, without the city, Pompey's pillar, the shaft whereof is six fathoms high, all of one piece of curious granite, is justly admired as one of the finest columns that is anywhere to be seen. *Calmet's Dictionary* under the word, and *Wells's Geography* of the New Testament.

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or 341.

(upon his declaring that he would quit his station both in church and state rather than undertake it) Joseph offered, with his permission, and the people's approbation, to go in his stead. In the mean time he took care to entertain Athenion at his own house, as long as he continued in Jerusalem, in a very splendid and magnificent manner: when he departed, he presented him with several very valuable gifts; and so sent him away in a good disposition, to make as favourable a representation to the king as the case would bear, until himself should come to the Egyptian court, in order to give him a full satisfaction.

Athenion was so taken with this prudent behaviour, and kind entertainment of Joseph, that, when he came to give the king a report of his embassy, he could not but mention his name with pleasure; and when he told him of his intentions to come and wait upon him himself, he set forth his character with so much advantage, that the king expressed a desire to see him. In a short time Joseph set out for Alexandria; and, falling in upon the road with several of the chief nobility of Cælo-Syria and Phœnicia, whose business at court was to farm the royal revenues of these provinces, he joined company with them; and having learned from their discourse of what value these revenues were, he made use of that intelligence afterwards, both to his own and the king's advantage.

When they all arrived at Alexandria, the king was gone to Memphis*; so that Joseph made haste thither, and had the good fortune to meet him, the queen, and Athenion, all in the same chariot, returning to Alexandria. The king, upon Athenion's signifying who he was, called him into the chariot; and having mentioned his uncle's ill usage in not paying him his tribute, he was thereupon entertained with so handsome an apology for that neglect, which he chiefly imputed to his uncle's old age, and other infirmities, that he not only satisfied the king, but gave him withal so good an opinion of the advocate, that, when he came to Alexandria, he ordered him to be lodged in the palace, and entertained at his expence.

When the day of farming out the revenues to the best bidder was come, the Syrian and Phœnician noblemen, with whom Joseph had travelled to Alexandria, beat down their price, and would give no more for all the duties of Cælo-Syria, Phœnicia, Judea, and Samaria, than eight thousand talents: but Joseph, having found fault with them for undervaluing the king's revenues, offered to give twice as much, even exclusive of the forfeitures which used before to belong to the farmers; and was thereupon admitted to be the king's receiver-general of all these provinces.

Upon the credit of this employment he borrowed at Alexandria five hundred talents, wherewith he satisfied the king for his uncle's arrears; and having received a guard of two thousand men to support him in the collection of the duties, he left Alexandria, and immediately entered upon it. In some places he met with opposition, and very opprobrious language; but having ordered the chief ringleaders to be seized, and ex-

* This was a very famous city, and, till the time of the Ptolemies, who removed to Alexandria, the place of residence for the ancient kings of Egypt. It was situated above the parting of the river Nile, where the Delta begins. Towards the south of this city stood the famous pyramids, two of which were esteemed the wonders of the world; and in this city was fed the ox Apis, which Cambyzes slew in contempt of the Egyptians worshipping it as a god. The kings of Egypt took great pleasure in adorning this city; and in all its beauty it continued till the Arabians made a conquest of Egypt under the Caliph Omar. The general who took it built another city just by it, which was called Fustat, because his tent had

been a long time set up in that place, and the Caliph's Fatamites, when they became masters of Egypt, added another to it, which is known to us at this day by the name of Grand Cairo. The Mameluke Sultans of the dynasty of the Circassians, having afterwards built a strong fort on the eastern shore of the Nile, did, by degrees, annex a city to it, which came to be called the New Cairo, as what the Fatamites had built was called the Old; but it must be observed, that the ancient Memphis stood on the western shore of the Nile, whereas whatever the Arabians have there built from time to time, is on the eastern shore of that river. *Calmet's Dictionary* under the word.

emplary justice to be executed upon them, he thereby so terrified the rest, that they readily paid him his demands without any molestation. And in this office he continued for the space of two and twenty years under Ptolemy Euergetes and Philopater his son, until Ptolemy Epiphanes, the son of Philopater, lost these provinces to Antiochus the Great.

From 1 Macc.
i. — vi. 7.
2 Macc. iii. —
x. and from
Jos. Hist. lib.
xi. c. 7. to
lib. xii. c. 14.

On the death of Ptolemy Euergetes, his son Philopater (not without some suspicion of having poisoned his father) succeeded to the throne; and, in the fifth year of his reign, having, at Raphia, a town not far from Gaza, defeated the army of Antiochus the Great, he afterwards visited the cities which by this victory he had regained, among which Jerusalem was one. Here he took a view of the temple, gave valuable donatives to it, and offered up many sacrifices to the God of Israel; but not being content with this view from the outer court, (beyond which no Gentile was allowed to pass) he was for going into the sanctuary, nay, even into the holy of holies itself, where no one but the high priest (and that only on the great day of expiation) was allowed to enter. This made a great uproar all over the city. The high priest informed him of the sacredness of the place, and of the law of God which forbade his entrance. The priests and Levites were gathered together to hinder it. The people did earnestly deprecate it; and great lamentations were every where made, upon the apprehension of the approaching profanation of their holy temple: But all to no purpose. The king, the more he was opposed, the more resolute became to have his will satisfied, and accordingly pressed into the inner court; but as he was passing farther to go into the temple, he was seized with such a sudden terror and consternation of mind, that he was carried out of the place in a manner half dead, and, in a short time, departed from Jerusalem, highly incensed against the whole nation of the Jews, and venting many bitter threatenings against them.

Nor was he forgetful to put his threats in execution. For no sooner was he returned to Alexandria, but he published a decree, and caused it to be engraven on a pillar erected at the gate of his palace, excluding every one who would not sacrifice to the god whom he worshiped from having any access to him; degrading the Jews from the rights and privileges they had in the city; and ordering them all to come and (a) be stigmatized with the mark of an ivy leaf, (the badge of his god Bacchus) by an hot iron impressed upon them; and as many as refused to come, commanding them to be put to death.

Nor did his rage end here: For being determined to extirpate the whole Jewish nation, as many at least as were in his dominions, he sent out orders to his officers, requiring them to bring all the Jews who lived any where in Egypt bound in chains to Alexandria; and having shut them up in the Hippodrome, (a large place without the city, where the people used to assemble to see horse-races and other shows) he proposed the next day to make a spectacle of them, by having them destroyed by his † elephants. The elephants, to make them more furious, were intoxicated with wine mingled with frankincense: But the king, the night before, having sat up late at a drunken carousal, overslept himself, so that the show was put off till the day following; and the next night, having done the same again, the show, for the same cause, was put off to the

(a) 2 Maccab. vi. 7.

† In the books of the Maccabees, we find frequent mention made of elephants, because, after the reign of Alexander the Great, these animals were very much employed in the armies which the kings of Syria and Egypt raised. They were naturally of a very quiet and gentle disposition, and never made use of their strength but when they were irritated or compelled to it; and for this reason we find that the elephants which were in the army of Antiochus Eupater, had the blood of grapes and mulberries shewn them,

thereby to animate them to the combat, 1 Maccab. vi. 34. as those which here Ptolemy Philopater kept were intoxicated with incense dipped in wine, to make them more mad and furious. When they are thus irritated and inflamed, their strength is prodigious, and nothing can stand before them. Every creature that comes in their way they trample under foot, overthrow whole squadrons, knock down trees, and demolish houses. *Calmet's Dictionary* under the word.

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or 341.

third day. All this while the Jews, continuing shut up in the Hippodrome, ceased not, with lifted up hands, and voices, to pray unto God for their deliverance, which, accordingly, he vouchsafed them. For, on the third day, when the king was present, and the elephants were let loose, instead of falling upon the Jews, they turned all their rage upon those that came to see the show, and destroyed great numbers.

This wonderful interposal of Providence, in the protection of these poor people, together with some strange appearances at the same time seen in the air, so terrified the king, and all the spectators, that he ordered all the Jews to be set free; restored them to their former privileges; revoked every decree that had been made against them, and, among other favours, indulged them with this liberty,—Even to put to death all those Jews, who, in fear of persecution, had apostatized from their religion, which accordingly they put in rigorous execution.

Upon the death of * Ptolemy Philopater, his son Ptolemy Epiphanes (a child but of five years old) succeeded him in the throne: But Antiochus the Great, taking the advantage of the young king's inability to oppose him, marched an army into Cœlo-Syria and Palestine, and, in a very short time, made himself master of them. The Egyptians, however, under the command of Scopas their general, endeavoured to regain them, and had actually recovered Jerusalem into their possession; but, upon the approach of Antiochus in person, and the defeat which he gave them at Paneas, the Jews, who had been but badly used by Scopas (a very covetous and rapacious man), submitted to him very cheerfully; and, receiving him and his army into the city, assisted him in the reduction of the castle, where Scopas had left a garrison. In acknowledgment of which services, he, by a public edict, granted them many favours, and, among the rest, a liberty to live according to their own laws and religion, and a power to prohibit any stranger to enter within the sept of the temple, alluding to the attempt which Philopater had lately made that way.

But Antiochus had greater things in view than the subjection of a province or two; and therefore, to have his armies at liberty to engage the Romans †, who, since the defeat of Hannibal, in the second Punic war, were become justly formidable, made a peace with Ptolemy, and giving him his daughter Cleopatra in marriage, with her he resigned the provinces of Cœlo-Syria and Palestine by way of dower.

By this means Judea reverted to the Egyptian crown, and Joseph, the nephew of Onias, the high priest, was re-instated in the office of collecting the king's revenues in that and the neighbouring provinces. But as Ptolemy, in a short time, had a son by Cleopatra, upon which occasion it was necessary for Joseph, among other great officers of state, to congratulate the king and queen, and to make them such presents as were usual, he being now too old to take such a journey, and his other sons refusing to go, was obliged to send Hyrcanus, who was the youngest, but the best qualified for such a negotiation, to make his compliment in his stead. But the history of the young man's birth is somewhat remarkable.

(a) As Joseph's occasions, in his less advanced years, called him frequently to Alexan-

* This Ptolemy was a man entirely given up to his lusts and voluptuous delights. Drinking, gaming, and lasciviousness, were the whole employments of his life. Agathoclea his concubine, and Agathocles her brother, who was his catamite, governed him absolutely; and when Arsinoe (who was both his sister and wife) complained of the neglect which, by means of these two favourites, was put upon her, this so offended the king and his catamite, that orders were given to have her put to death. But he did not long survive her; for, having worn out a strong constitution by his intemperance and debaucheries, he ended

his life before he had lived out half the course of it. *Prideaux's Connection*, Anno 201.

† It was by Hannibal's instigation that he entered upon this war, wherein he was far from having the success which he expected. Two years he took up in making preparations for it; and had got together an army consisting of seventy thousand foot, twelve thousand horse, and fifty-four elephants; but the Romans, with less than half the number, met him near Magnesia, under Mount Sipylus, and there gave him a total overthrow.

(a) *Jewish. Antiq.* lib. xii, c. 4.

dria; one night while he was at supper with the king, (a) he fell desperately in love with a beautiful damsel that danced before him; and not being able to master his inordinate passion, he communicated it to his brother Solymius (who had accompanied him in his journey, and carried with him a daughter of his, with an intent to marry her at Alexandria), and desired of him, if possible, to procure him the enjoyment of her, but as secretly as he could, because of the sin and shame that would attend such an act. Solymius promised that he would: But instead of that, he conveyed his own daughter into his bed, and the next morning as secretly conveyed her away, so that his brother never discovered the deceit. In this manner Joseph accompanied with her for several nights; till, every time growing more and more enamoured, he made his complaint one day to his brother of his hard fate, who, by the laws of his religion, was forbidden to marry the woman that he loved, because she was an alien: Whereupon the other discovered the whole matter to him, and how, instead of the admired dancer, he had put his daughter to bed to him, as thinking it more eligible to wrong his own child than to suffer him to join himself to a strange woman, which their law expressly forbade. The surprisingness of this discovery, and the singular instance of his brother's kindness, so wrought upon Joseph's heart, that he immediately made the young woman his wife †, and of her the next year was born this Hyrcanus.

From 1 Macc.
i. — vi. 7.
2 Macc. iii —
x. and from
Jos. Hist. lib.
xi. c. 7. to
lib. xii. c. 14.

Hyrcanus, when he undertook the journey to Alexandria, persuading his father not to send his presents from Judea, but to purchase them rather at Alexandria, obtained by this means an unlimited credit upon his agent in that city: And therefore when he came thither, instead of ten talents (as might be expected), he demanded a thousand, which in our money amount to above two hundred thousand pounds.

With this money he bought an hundred beautiful boys for the king, and an hundred beautiful young maids for the queen, at the price of a talent a head; and when he presented them, they carried each a talent in their hands, the boys for the king, and the young maids for the queen; so that this article alone cost him four hundred talents. The rest he expended all in valuable gifts to the courtiers and great officers about the king, except what he kept for his own private use.

By these means, growing highly in favour with the king, queen, and all the court, he made use of his interest to supplant his father; and, under pretence of his old age and imbecility, obtained of the king a commission to be the collector of the royal revenues in all the country beyond Jordan; which so enraged his brothers, that (with their father's connivance at least, if not direct approbation) they conspired to way-lay him, and cut him off as he returned: But the guards who attended him, and were to assist him in the execution of his office, proved too strong in the assault, wherein two of his brothers fell.

When he came to Jerusalem, however, his father would not see him, and no body would own him; so that he passed over Jordan, and entered upon the execution of his office: But upon his father's death (which happened soon after) a war commenced between him and his surviving brothers about the paternal estate, which for some time disturbed the peace of the Jews at Jerusalem. But as the high priest and generality of the people sided with the brothers, he was again forced to retreat beyond Jordan, where he lived in a strong castle; until Antiochus Epiphanes, succeeding to the throne of Sy-

(a) *Jewish Antig.* lib. xii. c. 4.

† According to the Jewish law, an uncle might marry his niece, though an aunt (Levit. xviii. 12, 13. and xx. 19.) might not marry her nephew, for which the Jewish writers assign this reason:—That the aunt being, in respect of the nephew, in the same degree with the father or mother, in the line of descent, hath naturally a superiority above him; and therefore for

him to make her his wife, and thereby to bring her down to be in a degree below him (as all wives in respect of their husbands are), would be to disturb and invert the order of nature, but that there is no such thing done when the uncle married the niece; in which case, both keep the same degree and order that they were in before, without the least mutation. *Prideaux's Connection*, Anno 187.

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&c. or 5070.
Ant. Chris.
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ria, and threatening to punish him according to his deserts, made him, for fear of his threats, fall upon his sword and slay himself.

Upon the unhappy death of Antiochus the Great *, his son Seleucus Philopater succeeded him in the kingdom of Syria, to which was annexed Judea and the other adjacent provinces. At his first accession he favoured the Jews, and supplied them with all things for the service of the temple at his own expence; but being some time after informed by one Simon a Benjamite that there were great riches in the temple, he sent his treasurer Heliodorus to make seizure of them, and bring them to Antioch. But Heliodorus, going into the temple for that purpose, and entering into the sacred treasury, was stopped in his attempt by an apparition of angels, armed, as it were, to defend the place against his sacrilegious hands; for these are the words wherein the history of the Maccabees relates the matter:—(a) “There appeared unto him an horse, with a terrible rider upon him, and adorned with a very fair covering, and he ran fiercely, and smote at him with his fore-feet; and he that sat upon the horse seemed to have a complete harness of gold. Moreover, two other men appeared before him notable in strength, excellent in beauty, and comely in apparel, who stood by him on either side, scourging him continually, and giving him many sore stripes,” insomuch that he fell to the ground; but being taken up by those that attended him, and carried off in a litter, he continued speechless, and without all hopes of life for some time, till, at the intercession of his friends, the high priest prayed to God for him, and so he recovered.

Not long after this, the same Heliodorus, aspiring at the crown, poisoned his master Seleucus, in hopes of succeeding him; but Eumenes, king of Pergamus, and Attalus his brother, obstructed his design, and placed Antiochus, surnamed Epiphanes (another son of Antiochus the Great), upon the Syrian throne, who proved a very terrible enemy and persecutor of the Jews. No sooner was he settled in the kingdom, but, being destitute of money, and having an heavy tribute to pay to the Romans, (b) he deposed Onias, a man of singular piety and goodness, from the high priesthood, and, for three hundred and sixty talents (which he engaged to pay yearly), sold it to his brother Jason. But as Jason had supplanted Onias, so his brother Menelaus, being sent to Antioch with this tribute-money, for three hundred talents more than Jason had given, purchased the priesthood, and had him, in like manner, deposed: Whereupon he withdrew to the country of the Ammonites, waiting for some revolution in his favour.

Thus Menelaus got the chief priesthood by out-bidding his brother; but being summoned to appear before the king at Antioch for non-payment of the money, (c) he left Lysimachus, another of his brothers, his deputy in his absence, and by his means got many gold vessels out of the temple, which he selling at Tyre, and the cities round about, raised money enough, not only to pay the king his tribute, but to bribe Andronicus † likewise to murder his brother Onias; because he supposed that, at one time or

* On his coming into the province of Elymais, hearing that in that country there was a great treasure in the temple of Jupiter Belus, and being in great difficulties how to raise money to pay the Romans, he seized the temple by night, and spoiled it of all its riches; which so enraged the people of the country, that to revenge this sacrilege, they rose upon him, and slew him and all that were with him. He was a prince of a laudable character for humanity, clemency, beneficence, and of great justice in the administration of his government, and till the fiftieth year of his life managed all his affairs with that valour, prudence, and application, as made him prosper in all his undertakings, and deservedly gained him the title of the Great; but in the latter part of his

life, declining in the wisdom of his conduct, as well as in the vigour of his application, every thing he did then lessened him as fast as all his actions had aggrandized him before. *Prideaux's Connection*, Anno 187.

(a) 2 Maccab. iii. 25, &c.

(b) Chap. iv. 7. *Joseph. de Maccab. c. 4.*

(c) 2 Maccab. iv. 29.

† This Andronicus seems to have been left by Antiochus at Antioch to govern in his absence, and without this governor's interposition Menelaus could not compass his end to murder his brother; for Onias had fled to the asylum at Daphne, a small distance from the city, which always used to be a place of retreat, secure and inviolable: And therefore Menelaus

other, he might stand in his way, and because he had lately taken the freedom to re-
prove him sharply for this gross piece of sacrilege.

Andronicus did it to earn the money, but was soon overtaken with justice at † Antioch, and Lysimachus †² slain by the people at Jerusalem; yet such was the power of bribery at the Syrian court, that by the strength of this Menelaus, who was the contriver of all these mischiefs, found means to clear himself before Antiochus, and to get the three delegates from the Sanhedrim, who came from Jerusalem on purpose to accuse him, condemned and executed.

While Antiochus was engaged in war with Egypt, a false rumour was spread in Palestine that he was dead; and Jason, thinking this a fine opportunity for him to recover his station in Jerusalem as high priest, marched thither with above a thousand men; and having, by the assistance of the party which he had there, taken the city, and driven Menelaus into the castle, he acted all manner of cruelties upon his fellow-citizens, and put to death, without mercy, all that he could light on whom he took to be his adversaries.

Antiochus hearing of this, and supposing that the whole Jewish nation had revolted from him, marched with all haste out of Egypt into Judea; and (a) being informed on his march, that the people of Jerusalem, on the news which came of his death had made great rejoicings, the sense of this so provoked him against them, that laying siege to the city, and taking it by storm †, he slew of the inhabitants, in three days time, forty thousand persons, and having taken as many more captives, sold them to the neighbouring nations.

Nor did all this satisfy his rage: for, notwithstanding his father's edict, he forced himself into the temple *, and polluted, by his presence, both the Holy place and the

was forced to give the governor a round sum, to engage him (by false promises of safety) to prevail with his brother to come out, and as soon as he had him in his power to dispatch him *Calmet's Commentary*.

† For Onias having, by his laudable carriage while he lived at Antioch, gained much upon the esteem and affections of the people of the place, Greeks as well as Jews, they took his murder in such high indignation, that they both joined in a petition to the king against Andronicus for it. Hereupon cognizance being taken of the crime, and the wicked murderer convicted of it, Antiochus caused him, with infamy, to be carried to the place where the murder was committed, and there put to death for it in such a manner as he deserved. For Antiochus (as wicked a tyrant as he was) had sorrow and regret upon him for the death of so good a man, and therefore in the revenging of it he satisfied his own resentments, as well as those of the people who had petitioned him for it. *Prideaux's Connection*, Anno 172.

†² When it came to be known, that Lysimachus had been the chief instrument in robbing the temple, the multitude, fired with indignation, gathered themselves together against him, and though he attempted to form a party under the command of one Tyrannus, an old experienced officer, in order to resist their rage, and defend himself; yet the mob fell on them with such fury, that wounding some, and killing others, they forced the rest to flee; and then seizing on Lysimachus, him they slew, beside the treasury, within the temple, and thereby, for that time, put an end to this sacrilege. *Prideaux's Connection*, Anno 172.

(a) 1 Maccab. i. 20, &c. 2 Maccab. v. 5, 6. *Joseph. Antiq. lib. xii. c. 8.*

† Both the author of the second book of the Maccabees, chap. v. 11. and Diodorus Siculus, lib. xxxiv. tell us, that Antiochus took Jerusalem by force; and yet Josephus (in his 12th book of Antiquities, c. 7.) affirms, that he made himself master of it without any manner of difficulty, because "the gates were set open to him by the treachery of a party he had made in the town." But herein he is contrary to himself; for in his history of the Jewish war, lib. i. c. 1. he says, that Antiochus took *κατὰ Κράτος*, i. e. by force; and there represents him as enraged by what he had suffered in the siege; and in the same history (lib. vi. c. 11.), he speaks of those who were slain at the siege, fighting in defence of the place. But the history of the Jewish wars, and that of his Antiquities, he wrote at different times, which might make him in some places not so consistent *Prideaux's Connection*.

* Several heathen authors, in their accounts of this king Antiochus, make mention of his taking a city that was at peace and in alliance with him (meaning thereby Jerusalem), committing many cruelties there, and plundering the temple, wherein he found great riches; but Diodorus Siculus, in his relation of this matter, lib. xxxiv. is more particular and express.— "That this prince, having intruded into the most sacred place of the temple (which none but the high priest was permitted to enter), found there a stone statue of a man, with a long beard and a book in his hand, mounted upon an ass. This he took for Moses, the author of the law, and founder of the nation of the Jews, and of the city of Jerusalem; and therefore,

From 1 Macc.
i. — vi. 7.
2 Macc. iii. —
x. and from
Jos. Hist. lib.
xi. c. 7. to
lib. xii. c. 14.

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Holy of Holies. He sacrificed a great sow upon the altar of burnt-offerings, and caused the broth (which was made of some part of the flesh) to be sprinkled all over the temple, that he might defile it as much as possible. He took away the altar of incense, the shew-bread table, the candlestick of seven branches, and several other golden vessels, utensils, and donatives of former kings, to the value of eight hundred talents of gold; and making the like plunder in the city, he returned to Antioch, (a) leaving behind him Philip a Phrygian, a man of a cruel and barbarous temper, to be governor of Judea; Andronicus, another of the like disposition, to be governor of Samaria; and Menelaus, who was worse than all the rest, to continue still over them in the office of high priest.

Not long after this, (b) there were seen at Jerusalem, for forty days together, strange sights in the air of horsemen and footmen, armed with shields, spears, and swords, and, in great companies fighting against, and charging each other as in battle array; which foreboded those calamities of war and desolation that soon after happened in that city and nation. For Antiochus, still breathing out rage against the poor Jews, sent Apollonius, one of his generals, with an army of two and twenty thousand men, and an express order to kill all the men that remained in Jerusalem, and to sell the women and children for slaves. (c) On his first arrival, Apollonius carried himself peaceably, concealing his intent, and forbearing all hostilities till the return of the Sabbath, when he put his bloody commission in execution. (d) For, falling upon the city while the people were at their devotion, he massacred many of the inhabitants, plundered the place, led away the women and children captives, and forced the few that escaped to betake themselves to deserts and caves for shelter. Nor was this all; for in a short time after Antiochus made a decree, commanding all nations to leave their ancient rites and usage, and to conform to the religion of the king; which (however expressed in general terms) was chiefly designed against the Jews.

(e) The officer who was sent to see this decree put in execution was one Athenæus, a man well versed in all the ceremonies of the Grecian idolatry, and therefore thought a proper person to initiate the people into the observance of them. On his coming to Jerusalem, (f) all sacrifices to the God of Israel were superseded, and the rites of the Jewish religion suppressed. The temple itself was dedicated to Jupiter Olympius †, (whose image was set up on the altar of burnt-offerings) and all the people upon pain of death were obliged to sacrifice to it. Those who met in caves to keep the Sabbath,

to remove the cause of that universal hatred, which all nations bore to the Jews, he went about abolishing of their law; and to this purpose caused a large sow to be sacrificed to this image of their legislator, on an altar which he found there; and having sprinkled the blood and the broth that he made of the victim, and therewith polluted the sacred volume of their law, he made the high priest and other Jews eat of its flesh, and put out the lamp which used to be kept perpetually burning." But several of these circumstances, (more especially that of a man mounted upon an ass), are no where to be found in any other history; and may therefore, not improperly, be placed among those fables which the heathens invented and published, on purpose to give some colour for their inveterate hatred against the Jews. *Calmet's* Commentary on 1 Maccab. i. 23.

(a) 2 Maccab. v. 22, 23.

(b) Ibid. ver. 2, 3.

(c) 1 Maccab. i. 29, 30.

(d) 2 Maccab. v. 24, &c.

(e) Chap. vi. 1.

(f) 1 Maccab. i. 44, &c. *Jewish Antiq.* lib. xii. c. 7.

† This profanation of the temple, and the erecting

of this idol in it, had long before been foretold by the prophet Daniel, under the name of "abomination of desolation," chap. xi. 31. For this is the description which he gives of the reign of Antiochus, and the bitter persecutions which he raised: "He shall return with indignation against the holy covenant, and have intelligence with them that forsake it. Armies shall stand on his side, and he shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the daily sacrifice, and there place the abomination (or abominable thing) that maketh desolate, or (as in the margin) quite astonisheth. Such as do wickedly against the covenant, shall be corrupt by flatteries, but the people that know their God, shall do great exploits; and they that have understanding shall instruct many; yet they shall fall by the sword, by famine, by captivity, and by spoil:—And the king shall do according to his will, and shall exalt and magnify himself above every god. He shall speak wonderful things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished; for that which is determined shall be done," ver. 30, &c.

if they happened to be discovered, were burnt. The book of the law was torn and cast into the fire; the circumcising of infants were forbidden; and women accused of having circumcised their children, were led about the streets with those children hanging about their necks, and then both cast headlong over the steepest part of the walls.

From 1 Macc.
i. — vi. 7.
2 Macc. iii.—
x and from
Jos. Hist. lib.
xi. c. 7. to
lib. xii. c. 14.

No less severity was used to enforce upon the people the heathen worship which the decree enjoined, than there was to deter them from their own. In every city altars, groves, and chapels for idols, were set up, and officers sent to compel them, once every month, to offer victims to the Grecian gods, and to eat of the flesh of swine and of other unclean beasts that were at that time sacrificed. In short, no manner of cruelty was omitted to force the Jews to abandon their religion and turn idolaters; but though, in this terrible persecution, some of these wretched people yielded to violence, many of them chose rather to die than to forsake the law of their God.

Among the latter sort, (a) those of the most memorable note were † Eleazar, a chief doctor of the law, and that heroine Solomona and her seven sons. Eleazar was a very aged man; yet when his persecutors would have compelled him to eat swine's flesh, (which they forced into his mouth) he spit it out; and even when some, in pity to his age, would have given him leave to elude the sentence, by taking a piece of any other flesh, and eating it as swine's flesh, he scorned to purchase his life at so sordid a rate, desiring them to dispatch him rather than suffer him to be guilty of dissimulation, and stain the honour of his grey hairs with so mean an act. Nor were the seven brothers and their mother inferior to him in religious courage and magnanimity: For when the king, pretending pity to their youth, and respect to their family, (which was noble, persuaded them to renounce their religion, and embrace that of the Gentiles, promising them great rewards and promotions if they would comply; and when, finding that this would have no effect, he ordered the great variety of torments which he had provided to be shewn them, thinking thereby to affright them with the sad prospect of what they were to suffer; the instruments of death did no more terrify than the allurements of the tyrant did persuade them; but, inspired with a truly holy zeal and celestial bravery, "They unanimously declared their obedience to the law of God, and the precepts which he had delivered by Moses; assuring him, that all his cruelty could not hurt them; that the only effect their tortures could have would be to secure to them the glorious rewards of unshaken patience and injured virtue; but at the same time admo-

(a) 2 Maccab. vi. Joseph. de Maccabæis.

† Some interpreters are of opinion that this was the same Eleazar who, at the head of the seventy-two interpreters that were to translate the Sacred Scriptures, was sent into Egypt, and that he suffered at Jerusalem in the presence of the governor, named Felix; but Ruffinus (in his Latin paraphrase on the book of Josephus concerning the Maccabees) will needs have it, that not only Eleazar, but the mother and her seven sons, viz. Maccabæus, Aber, Machir, Judas, Achas, Areth, and Jacob, (for these are the names which he gives them), were all carried from Judea to Antioch, and there suffered martyrdom. The reason of the thing, however, as well as the tenor of the history which is given us by the author of the second book of Maccabees, chap. vi. and vii. and by Josephus in the above-mentioned book, make it much more likely, that Jerusalem, and not Antioch, was made the scene of this cruelty; especially since it being designed for an example of terror to the Jews in Judea, it would have lost its force, had it been executed in any other country. But wherever

this happened, it is certain that Eleazar deserved all the commendation which the fathers have given him: For whether we consider the purity of his sentiments, or the sublimity of his doctrine, or the delicacy of his conscience, we must acknowledge that there are few saints in the Old Testament that have given us a more exact pattern of charity, sincerity, and magnanimity. "It becometh not our age, said he, in any wise to dissemble, whereby many young persons might think that Eleazar, being fourscore years old and ten, were now gone to a strange religion, and so they, through my hypocrisy and desire to live a little time, and a moment longer, should be deceived by me, and I get a stain in my old age, and make it abominable. For though, for the present time, I should be delivered from the punishment of men, yet should not I escape the hand of the Almighty, neither alive nor dead; wherefore now, manfully changing this life, I will shew myself such a one as my age requireth," 2 Maccab. vi. 24, &c. Calmet's Commentary, and Prideaux's Connection, Anno 167.

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nishing him, that by the murder of so many innocent men, he would arm the Divine vengeance against him, and for the momentary pains which he inflicted on them, would himself become obnoxious to everlasting torments."

This is the main purport of most of their speeches; but the variety of their tortures was almost innumerable, and for the horror of them inexpressible. All this while their mother stood by, beholding their sufferings, and exhorting every one, as it came to his turn, to behave gallantly. At length, when herself was only left, and the soldiers were approaching to carry her to execution, she prevented their rage and all attempts upon her person, by throwing herself voluntarily into the fire †. Thus ended this doleful but glorious day, with the death of the victorious Solomona, who triumphed in the sharpest agonies of her sons, and her own sufferings, and, through a sea of the most exquisite pains, waded to the port of eternal rest!

While this persecution raged at Jerusalem, (a) Mattathias, the son of John, the son of Simeon, the son of Asmonæus, (from whom the family had the name of Asmonæans,) a priest of the course of Joarib †², with his five sons, John, Simon, Judas, Eleazar, and Jonathan, retired to Modin, a little place in the tribe of Dan, and there bemoaned the hard fate of their religion and country. But they had not been long in this retreat before Antiochus sent one of his military officers, named Apelles, to put his decree in execution.

Apelles, having called the people together, and told them the intent of his coming, addressed himself more particularly to Mattathias; persuading him to comply with the king's commands, that by his example he might influence others; and promising him withal, that, in case he would do so, he should be taken into the number of the king's friends, and promoted to great honour and riches. But to this Mattathias made answer, with a loud voice, and in the audience of all the people, that no consideration whatever should ever induce him, or any of his family, to forsake the law of their God; that the examples of those who had apostatized were no rule to him, nor the commands of the greatest monarch of any validity, when they were sent to oblige him to embrace idolatry; and with these words, seeing a Jew of the place presenting himself at the heathen altar, in order to offer sacrifice according to the king's injunctions, he ran up to the apostate, and, with a zeal like that of Phineas, slew him with his own hand; and then turning upon the king's commissioner, by the assistance of his sons, and those that were with them, dispatched him likewise, and all that attended him.

After this, Mattathias overturned the altars, and pulled down the idols that were in the place; and having got together his own family, and invited all that were zealous for the law to follow him, he retired into the mountains, in order to make there the best defence he could: but the Jews †³ had one principle which, in the beginning of this their

† The Latin version says, that she was dragged on the ground to execution, where, having cut off her breasts and scourged her naked body, they flung her into a boiling cauldron: But the Arabic version, on the contrary, affirms, that having lived to see her seven sons martyred, and lying dead on the ground before her, she flung herself into the midst of them, and praying to God to take her out of the world, immediately expired. *Universal History*, lib. ii. c. 11.

(a) 1 Maccabees ii. 1, &c. *Jewish Antiq.* lib. xii. c. 8.

†² This was the first of the twenty-four courses of the priests that served in the temple, 1 Chron. xxiv. 7. and because Mattathias undertook to determine for the necessity of fighting on the Sabbath, in case they were assaulted by the enemy, some have from hence inferred that the people had made choice

of him for their high priest: But, besides that this decision is not sufficient to prove this, and that it nowhere appears that he ever performed the office of high priest, but only put himself at the head of a poor distressed people, as being a person of the greatest power and authority among them, it is certain that both Menelaus and Alcimus were then alive; and though they were wicked men and intruders into the office, yet they were nominated by king Antiochus, (who then assumed the right of nomination), and so were looked upon as high priests. *Calmet's Dictionary* under the word *Mattathias*.

†³ By the law of Moses, the Jews were commanded to "do no manner of work on the Sabbath-day; but this was a precept which would admit of some exceptions, and what some people took in a more rigorous sense than others. The Samaritans, for in-

resistance, had like to have ruined them quite, and that was the scrupulous observation of the Sabbath, even to such a degree as not to defend themselves on that day; where- of their enemies taking the advantage, destroyed great numbers of them, without their making the least opposition. Mattathias, however, and his followers, finding the fatality of their mistake in this particular, (a) made a decree, (which was confirmed by the unanimous consent of all the priests and elders among them) that whenever they were attacked on the Sabbath-day, it was lawful for them to fight for their lives, and to defend themselves in the best manner they could, which afterwards became a general rule in all their wars.

From 1 Macc. i. — vi. 7.
2 Macc. iii. — x. and from Jos. Hist. lib. xi. c. 7. to lib. xii. c. 14.

While Mattathias abode in the mountains, great multitudes of Jews, who had any true concern for their ho'y religion, came and joined him; and among these there was a good company of Assidæans, † men mighty in valour, and extremely zealous for the law; so that, when he had got together such a number as made the appearance of a small army, (b) he came out of his fastnesses, and, going round the cities of Judah, pulled down the heathen altars; re-established the true worship; caused the children to be circumcised; cut off all apostates that fell in his way; and destroyed all persecutors wherever he came. Having thus acted the part of a brave and prudent general, for the small time he had the command of his little army, Mattathias was forced at last to

stance, thought themselves obliged to observe it to such a degree of strictness, as not to stir out of their places on that day, because the law is literally so expressed, Exod. xvi. 29. but the Jews were of opinion, that they were permitted to make their escape from danger, or to walk such a compass of ground (which they called a Sabbath-day's journey) if it were for any necessary occasion on that day. In our Saviour's time, it was allowable, they thought, to pull any animal out of a pit or a ditch on that day, Matth. xii. 11. but the Talmudical doctors were for revoking that permission, and found fault with him for even healing the sick and the lame on the Sabbath. Mattathias and his company, by sundry experiences, were convinced, that too scrupulous an observance of the Sabbath had brought several calamities upon their nation; that Ptolemy the son of Lagus, the first king of Egypt of that name, by assaulting Jerusalem on the Sabbath-day, wherein the Jews would do nothing to defend themselves, became master of it without opposition; and that, but just lately, a great number of their brethren had been passively slain, because they would not so much as handle their arms on that day; and thereupon they came to a resolution to defend themselves whenever they were attacked, be the day what it would; but we do not find that they came to any decision, whether they themselves were to attack the enemy on the Sabbath. On the contrary, it seems as if they had determined that they were only permitted to repel force by force; and therefore we read, that when Pompey besieged the temple, observing that the Jews did barely defend themselves on the seventh day, he ordered his men to offer no hostilities, but only to raise the batteries, plant their engines, and make their approaches on that day, being well assured, that in doing of this he should meet with no molestation from them; and by this means he carried the place much sooner than he otherwise would have done. *Jewish Antiquities*, lib. xiv. c. 8. *Jewish Wars*, lib. i. c. 5. and *Calmet's* Commen-

tary on 1 Maccab. ii. 41.

(a) 1 Maccab. ii. 40, 41. *Jewish Antiq.* lib. xii. c. 8.

† When the Jewish church came to be settled again in Judea, after the return from the Babylonish captivity, there were two sorts of men among the members of it; the one who contented themselves with that only which was written in the law of Moses, and these were called *Zadikim*, i. e. *the righteous*; and the other, who, over and above the law, added the constitutions and traditions of the elders, and, by way of supererogation, devoted themselves to many rigorous observances; and these being reckoned in a degree of holiness above the others, were called *Chasidim*, i. e. *the pious*. From the former of these were derived the sects of the Samaritans, Sadducees, and Karaites, and from the latter the Pharisees, the Essenes, and Assidæans. These Assidæans, or Chasidæans rather, (as they should be written) were a kind of religious society, whose chief and distinguishing character was to maintain the honour of the temple; and therefore they were not only content to pay the usual tribute for the reparation of it, but charged themselves with farther expences upon that account; for every day (except that of the great expiation) they sacrificed a lamb (besides those of daily oblation), which was called the "sin-offering of the Assidæans." They practised greater hardships and mortifications than the rest, and their common oath was by the temple, for which our Saviour reproves the Pharisees, Matth. xxiii. 16. who had learned that oath of them. Mattathias, however, being joined by men of this principle, who made it one of the main points of their piety to fight zealously for the defence of the temple (which was then fallen into the hands of the heathen), was not a little strengthened in his party, and in some measure able to take the field. *Scaliger*, in *Elench. Triheresii*, &c. *Prideaux's* Connection, Anno 197, and *Calmet's* Commentary.

(b) 1 Maccab. ii. 44, &c. *Jewish Antiq.* lib. xii. c. 8.

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submit to the weight of an hundred and forty-six years; but before his death, (a) he called his five sons together, and, having exhorted * them to stand up valiantly for the law of God, and, with a steady courage and constancy, to fight the battles of Israel against the present persecutors, he appointed Judas to be their captain in his stead, and Simon to be their counsellor; and so, giving up the ghost, he was buried at Modin, in the sepulchres of his forefathers, and all the "faithful in Israel made great lamentation for him."

Judas † (who is surnamed Maccabæus), as soon as he had taken upon him the command, went round the cities of Judea, in the same manner as his father had done, destroying every where all utensils and implements of idolatry; slaying all idolaters and apostate Jews; rescuing the true worshippers of God from the hands of their oppressors; and, for their better security for the future, fortifying their towns, rebuilding their fortresses, and placing strong garrisons in them. These proceedings gave the Syrian court some umbrage; and therefore Antiochus (b) ordered Apollonius, ‡² his governor in Samaria, to raise forces, and go against him; but Judas having defeated and slain him, made a great havoc among his troops, and finding the governor's sword among the spoils, he took it for his own use, and generally fought with it all his life after. Seron, the deputy-governor of some part of Cœlo-Syria, hearing of Apollonius's defeat, got together all the forces that were under his command, and in hopes of gaining himself honour, (c) came in pursuit of Judas; but instead of that, he met with the same fate, being vanquished and slain in the manner that Apollonius was.

Enraged at these two defeats, Antiochus sent three eminent commanders, Ptolemy-Macron, Nicanor, and Gorgias, to manage the war against the Jews; who, with an

(a) 1 Maccab. ii. 49, &c. *Jewish Antiq.* lib. xii. c. 8.

* The speech which Josephus puts in the mouth of old Mattathias upon this occasion, is widely different from what we find in 1 Maccab. ii. 49, &c. but not undeserving of our observation.—"My dear sons, says he, my life is drawing to an end, but I am to charge you, upon my blessing, before I leave you, that you stand firm to the cause that your father has asserted before you, without any staggering or shrinking. Remember what I have told you, and do as I have advised you. Do your utmost to support the rights and laws of your country, and to restore the order of a nation that wants but very little of being swallowed up in confusion. Have nothing to do with those that either for fear or for interest have betrayed it. Shew yourselves to be sons worthy of such a father; and, in contempt of all force and extremity, carry your lives in your hands, and deliver them up with comfort, if any occasion should require it, in defence of your country; computing with yourselves, that this is the way to preserve yourselves in God's favour, and that, in consideration of so unshaken a virtue, he will, in time, restore you to the liberty of your former life and manners. Our bodies, it is true, are mortal; but great and generous actions will make us immortal in our memory; and that is the glory I would have you aspire to, that is to say, the glory of making the history of your lives famous to after ages by your illustrious actions." The rest of his speech agrees with what we find in the book of the Maccabees, wherein he distributes to each son the office that he knew him best qualified for, and then concludes, "Do but mind your business, and depend up-

on it that all men of honour and piety will join with you." *Jewish Antiq.* lib. xii. c. 8.

† The reason why Judas had the name of Maccabæus given him, according to the most general opinion, is, that he had the initial letters of *Mi Camo-ka Baelim Jehovah*, i. e. "Who is like unto thee among the gods, O Jehovah?" Exod. xv. 11. for the motto upon his standard, which letters, being put together, made the artificial word *Maccabi*; that from hence all that fought under that standard were called *Maccabees* or *Maccabæans*; and that he, in a more especial manner, as being the captain of them, had that name by way of eminence. It cannot be denied, indeed, but that abbreviations of this and several other kinds were very frequent among the Jews, and that the Romans bore upon their ensigns the letters S. P. Q. R. *Senatus, Populusque Romanus*; but still it must be owned that Judas was called by this name, 1 Maccab. ii. 4,—66. before ever he set up this standard; and therefore others chuse rather to derive it from the Hebrew words *Makke-baidh*, i. e. a conqueror in the Lord; which explication both the double c, which occurs in the word Maccabee, and his father's account of Judas, viz. that "he had been mighty and strong even from his youth," seem to favour. *Prideaux's Connection*, Anno 167, and *Calmet's Commentary* on 1 Maccab. ii. 4.

(b) 1 Maccab. iii. 10. *Jewish Antiq.* lib. xi. c. 10.

‡² This, in all probability, was the same Apollonius whom Antiochus sent at first to plunder Jerusalem, and afterwards to set up the statue of Jupiter Olympius, and to compel the Jews to relinquish their religion. *Calmet's Commentary*.

(c) 1 Macc. iii. 13, &c. *Jewish Antiq.* lib. xii. c. 10.

army of forty thousand foot, and seven thousand horse, together with a great number of auxiliaries from neighbouring nations, and renegado Jews, (a) came and encamped at Emmaus, * not far from Jerusalem. Judas, on the other hand, marched with his men to Mizpeh, † where, having implored God's merciful assistance in this time of distress, and *² encouraged them in words proper on such an occasion, to fight for their religion, laws, and liberties, with a courage undaunted, and (as the cause was God's) with a firm assurance of success, he led them forth to the engagement. But having first caused proclamation (b) to be made, that all such as had that year built houses, planted vineyards, betrothed wives, or were in any degree fearful, should depart, his six thousand men, which he had at first, were reduced to three thousand.

From 1 Macc.
i. — vi. 7.
2 Macc. iii.—
x. and from
Jos. Hist. lib.
xi. c. 7. to
lib. .ii. c. '4.

(c) With this handful of men, however, he was resolved to give the enemy battle : But hearing that Gorgias was detached from them with five thousand foot and a thousand horse, to surprise his camp by night, he countermined his plot by another of the same kind : For, quitting his own camp, and marching towards the enemy, he fell upon them, (while Gorgias, with the best of his forces, was absent) and put them into such a surprize and confusion, that they took to their heels and fled, leaving him master of their camp, and three thousand of their men dead upon the spot.

Gorgias, coming to the Jewish camp, found it empty ; and concluding from thence that Judas had fled into the mountains for fear, he pursued him thither ; but when he found him not, and was returning to his own camp, he understood that it had been entered and burnt ; that the main army was broken and fled ; and that Judas was ready in the plains to give him a warm reception. Hereupon he could no longer keep his men together ; for, seized with a panic fear, they flung down their arms and fled : When Judas, putting himself in pursuit of them, slew great numbers more, so that the whole amounted to nine thousand, and of those that escaped from the battle most were sore wounded and maimed. Judas, (d) with his victorious army, returning from the

(a) 1 Maccab. iii. 39, &c. and *Josephus*, *ibid*.

* This was a village lying to the west of Jerusalem, and between seven and eight miles from it. It was honoured with our Saviour's presence after his resurrection, and therein were hot baths, (for Emmaus comes from the Hebrew *Chamath*, which signifies *baths of hot water*) that were very beneficial to those that used them. *Calmet's Dictionary* under the word.

† At this time Jerusalem was in the hands of the heathens, and the sanctuary trodden under foot ; so that Judas could not assemble his men there, to implore the assistance of God in this time of imminent danger ; and therefore he repaired to Mizpeh, a place where the people oftentimes used to assemble to prayer, (Jud. xx. 1. 1 Kings xv. 22. 2 Chron. xvi. 6.) Here he and all his army addressed themselves to God in solemn fasting and prayer, for his assistance and protection : And herein he acted the part of a wise and religious commander, as knowing that the battle was the Lord's, and that therefore it would be impious to begin any such enterprise without first imploring the Divine aid. *Prideaux's Connection*, Anno 166.

*² The speech which Judas makes to his men upon this occasion, as we have it in *Josephus*, is a very excellent one :—" We shall never have, says he, my fellow soldiers and companions, such an opportunity again of shewing our bravery in the defence of our country, and the contempt of all dangers, as we have now before us ; for, upon the issue of to-morrow's combat depends, not only our liberty, but all the

comforts and advantages that attend it ; and, over and above the blessing of such a freedom, our very religion lies at stake with it too, and we cannot secure the one but by preserving the other. Bethink yourselves well, therefore, what it is you are to contend for, and you will find it to be no less than the sum and substance of the greatest happiness that you ever enjoyed, that is to say, in the peaceable possession of your ancient laws, rights, and discipline. Now, whether you will rather chuse to perish with infamy, and to involve the miserable remainder of all your countrymen in the same ruin, or to venture one generous push for the redemption of yourselves and your friends, that is the single question. Death is the same thing to the coward that it is to the valiant man, and as certain to the one as the other ; but there is great difference in point of honour, and everlasting fame, between a gallant man, that falls in vindication of his religion, liberties, laws, and country, and a scoundrel, that abandons all for fear of losing a life which he cannot save at last. Take these things into your thoughts, and make this use of the meditation. You have nothing to trust to but God's Providence and your own concurring resolutions, and, at the worst, while we contend for victory, we can never fail of glory." *Jewish Antiquities*, lib. xii. c. 11.

(b) Deut. xx. 7, 8.

(c) 1 Maccab. iv. 1, &c.

(d) 1 Maccab. iv. 23, &c. *Jewish Antiq.* lib. xi. c. 10.

A. M. 3596,
&c. or 5070.
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chace, entered the enemy's camp, where he found plenty of rich plunder ; and so, proceeding in triumph to Jerusalem, celebrated the next day (which was the Sabbath) with great devotion, rejoicing, and praising God for this signal and merciful deliverance.

Judas, after this, having intelligence that Timotheus (*a*), governor of the country beyond Jordan, and Bacchides, another lieutenant in those parts, were drawing forces together in order to invade him, marched directly against them ; and having overthrown them in a great battle, slew above twenty thousand of their men, enriched his army with their spoils, and out of them provided himself with arms and other things necessary for the future carrying on of the war.

(*b*) Lysias, whom the king, when he went upon his expedition into Persia, had constituted chief governor of all the country from Euphrates to Egypt, being vexed and ashamed at all these defeats, put himself at the head of an army of sixty thousand foot and five thousand horse ; and marching into Judea, with a full intent to destroy the country and all its inhabitants, he pitched his camp at Bethzura †, a strong place lying to the south of Jerusalem, near the confines of Idumæa †². There Judas met him with ten thousand men only ; and having engaged his numerous army, and slain five thousand of them, the rest he put to flight, and sent Lysias back again with his baffled forces to Antioch, but with a purpose to come again with a greater strength another year.

By this retreat of his, Judas having made himself master of all Judea, thought it his duty to purge the house of the Lord, and to remove those profanations which, for three years last past, it had been forced to submit to. To this purpose he appointed a certain number of priests to cleanse the sanctuary, to pull down the altar which the heathens had set up, and to build another of unhewn (*c*) stones, to consecrate the courts anew, and to make all things again fit and commodious for the service of God.

Antiochus, in his sacrilegious pillage of the temple (which we have related), had taken away the altar of incense, the table of the shew-bread, the golden candlestick, and several other vessels and utensils, without which the service of the temple could not regularly be performed ; but out of the spoils (*d*) which Judas had taken from the enemy, he was able to have all these things made anew, of the same metal, and in the same manner as they were before ; and having thus put all things in their proper order, he had the temple dedicated again, with as much solemnity as the present state of affairs would permit, and in commemoration hereof appointed a festival †³ of eight days continuance (which

(*a*) 2 Maccab. viii. 30, 31.

(*b*) 1 Maccab. iv. 26, &c. *Jewish. Antiq.* lib. xii. c. 11.

† It had been fortified by king Rehoboam, (2 Chron. xi. 7.) and was at this time a very important fortress, as being one of the keys of Judea on the south side of Idumæa. *Universal History.* lib. ii. c. 11.

†² Wherever the name of Idumæa, or the land of Edom, occurs in any of the writings of the Old Testament, it is to be understood of that Idumæa, or land of Edom, which lay between the lake of Sodom and the Red Sea, and was afterwards called Arabia Petræa. But the inhabitants of this country being driven out by the Nabathæans, while the Jews were in the Babylonish captivity, and their land laid desolate, they then took possession of as much of the southern part of it as contained what had formerly been the whole inheritance of the tribe of Simeon, and half of the tribe of Judah, where, at this time, they dwelt, but had not as yet embraced the Jewish religion. And this is the only Idumæa, and the inhabitants of it the only Idumæans or Edomites, which are anywhere spoken of after the Babylonish captivity. After their

coming into this country, Hebron, which had formerly been the metropolis of the tribe of Judah, became the capital of Idumæa, and between that and Jerusalem lay Bethzura, a strong fortress, which the author of the second book of Maccabees, chap. xi. 5. places at no more than five furlongs distance from Jerusalem ; but this is a visible mistake, for Eusebius makes it at least twenty miles distant from it. *Pri-deaux's Connection*, Anno 165.

(*c*) Exod. xx. 25. Deut. xxvii. 5. Josh. viii. 31.

(*d*) 1 Maccab. iv. 49.

†³ This festival is commemorated in the Gospel, John ii. 23. and our blessed Saviour, we are told, came up to Jerusalem on purpose to bear a part in the solemnizing of it. Some indeed are of opinion, that it was another dedication-feast which Christ thus honoured with his presence ; but besides that the dedication both of Solomon's and Zerubbabel's temples (though they were very solemnly celebrated at the first erection of these temples) had never any anniversary feast afterwards kept in commemoration of them, the very history of the Gospel (which tells us, that it was

began on the fifth of the month Chisleu, much about the twentieth of our November) to be annually observed.

But though the temple was recovered and restored to its former use, yet Apollonius, at his taking Jerusalem, had erected a fortress on Mount Acra †, which commanding the mountain of the temple, and being still in the hands of the enemy, gave them the advantage of annoying all those who went up to the temple to worship. To remedy this inconvenience, Judas, at first, blocked up the fortress; but finding that he could not conveniently spare such a number of men as were necessary for that purpose, (a) he caused the mountain of the temple to be fortified with strong walls and high towers, and placed therein a sufficient garrison, both to defend it and protect those who went up to worship.

When the neighbouring nations came to understand that the Jews had recovered the city and temple of Jerusalem, and again restored the worship of God in that place, (b) they were moved with such envy and hatred against them, that they proposed to join with Antiochus in the extirpation of the whole nation; and accordingly had put all to death whom they found sojourning among them: But Judas, having first fortified Bethzura, to be a barrier against the Idumæans, who, at this time, were bitter enemies to the Jews, made war against them, and all the other nations that had confederated against him, in such a manner, and with such success, as shall hereafter be related.

Antiochus, in his expedition into Persia, was not so successful as he expected: For, (c) being informed that Elymais, a city in that country, was an opulent place, wherein stood the temple of Diana *, where immense riches were to be found, he marched his army thither with an intent to plunder both it and the temple: but the country round about taking the alarm, joined with the inhabitants in defence of the city and temple,

kept in winter) confines us to this dedication of Judas only. That of Solomon was on the seventh month, which fell about the time of the autumnal equinox; and that of Zerubbabel was on the twelfth month, which fell in the beginning of the spring; but that of Judas Maccabæus was on the twenty-fifth day of the ninth month, which fell in the middle of winter. So that the feast of the dedication, which Christ was present at in Jerusalem, was no other than that which was instituted by Judas, in commemoration of his dedication of the temple anew, after that it had been cleansed from idolatrous pollutions; and from hence Grotius (in his Commentary on the Gospel of St John, chap. x. 22.) very justly observes, that festival days, in memory of public blessings, may be piously instituted by persons in authority, without a Divine command. *Prideaux's Connection*, Anno 166.

† The word *acra*, which is of Greek original, signifies in general a *citadel*, in which sense the Syrians and Chaldeans used it: but when Antiochus gave orders for building of a citadel on the north side of the temple, upon an eminence that commanded it, the hill itself was called by the name of *acra*: which, according to Josephus, lib. xii. c. 7. and 14. was in the form of a semicircle. John Maccabæus took it out of the hands of the Syrians, who there kept a garrison, and pulled down its fortifications, and in their room were afterwards built the palace of Helena, and that of Agrippa, a place where the public records were kept, and another where the magistrates of Jerusalem assembled. *Calmet's Dictionary* under the word.

(a) 1 Maccab. iv. 60. *Jewish Antiq.* lib. xii. c. 11.

(b) 1 Maccab. v. 1, &c. (c) Chap. vi. 1, &c.

* Other authors agree with the account in the first book of Maccabees, that the temple of Elymais was prodigiously rich; and both Polybius and Diodorus Siculus (as they are cited by St Jerom on Dan. xi.) mentions this attempt of the king of Syria to plunder it. But the manner in which he came to be disappointed, is related quite differently in the second book of Maccabees. For therein we are told, that when Antiochus, pretending that he would marry the goddess of the temple, (whose name was Nanea) that thereby he might have the better title to the riches of it by way of dowry, was let into the temple to take possession of them, the priests opened a secret door that was in the ceiling, and from thence threw upon him and his attendants such a shower of stones as quite overwhelmed them, and so cut off their heads and cast them out, 2 Maccab. i. 13, &c. but who the goddess Nanea, who had this temple at Elymais was, the conjectures of the learned are various, since some will have her to be Venus, and others Cybele the mother of the gods, because the word in the Persian language signifies *mother*, though the most common opinion is, that she was Diana, or the moon, the same that Strabo calls Anais, or Ananitis: For that she was held to be a virgin-goddess is plain, because Antiochus pretended to espouse her, and that she was a chaste goddess, Plutarch (de Artaxerxe) seems to intimate, when he tells us, that Artaxerxes took the beautiful Aspasia (whom himself was in love with) from his son Darius, and devoted her to a perpetual virginity in the service of Anais the goddess of Ecbatana. *Calmet's Commentary* on 1 Maccab. vi. 1.

From 1 Macc.
i. — vi. 7.
2 Macc. iii. —
x. and from
Jos. Hist. lib.
xi. c. 7. to
lib. xii. c. 14.

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or 341.

and having beat him off, they obliged him to return to Ecbatana in Media, where, with shame and confusion, having received news of the ill success of his arms in Judea, and how the Jews had pulled down the images and altars that he had erected, recovered their temple at Jerusalem, and restored that place to its former worship, he made all the haste home he possibly could, threatening, as he went along, utterly to destroy the whole nation, and make Jerusalem the common place of sepulture to all the Jews. But (a) while these proud words were in his mouth, the judgments of God overtook him; for he was instantly seized with a pain in his bowels, and a grievous torment in his inward parts, which no remedy could assuage. Being resolute however in his revenge, he ordered his charioteer to double his speed; but, in the rapid motion, the chariot was overturned, and he thrown to the ground with such violence, as sorely bruised his whole body, and mashed (as it were) his limbs with the fall; so that being able to travel no farther, he was forced to put in at Tabæ, a little town in the confines of Persia and Babylonia, where he suffered most exquisite torments both of body and mind. In his body, a filthy ulcer broke out in his privy parts, wherein were bred an innumerable quantity of vermin, continually flowing from it, and such a stench proceeding from thence, as neither those that attended him, nor even he himself, could well bear: and in this condition he lay languishing and rotting till he died. In his mind his torments were no less, by reason of the several spectres and apparitions of evil spirits which he imagined were continually about him, reproaching and stinging his conscience with accusations of the evil deeds which he had been guilty of. Being made sensible at length by his afflictions, that all his sufferings were from the hand of God, for his plundering and profanation of his temple at Jerusalem, and for his hatred and cruelties to his servants who worshipped there, (b) he made an ample acknowledgment of this before he died, and many vows and solemn promises of a full reparation in case he recovered. But his repentance † came too late: and therefore, after having languished out a while in this miserable condition, and under these horrid torments of body and mind, at length being half consumed with the rottenness of his ulcer, he gave up the ghost, and died, after he had reigned eleven years.

THE OBJECTION.

ANTIOCHUS Epiphanes, we allow, was a very wicked man, and a great persecutor of the Jewish church and nation; but it does not appear from any other historian (c) that he died in the miserable manner that is here related; that he had any remorse of conscience for having slain the Jews and pillaged the temple; or was frightened upon that account with spectres and apparitions before he died. On the contrary, we find, even by the confession of Josephus (d) himself, that he was a man of a frank and generous temper, and had therefore the character (e) of the magnanimous and munifi-

(a) 2 Maccab. ix. 5, &c.

(b) 1 Maccab. vi. 12, 13. 2 Maccab. ix. 11, 18.
Joseph. Antiq. lib. xii. c. 13.

† This wicked king is an example of all hardened sinners, and false penitents, whose only motive of turning to God is their fear or feeling of punishment. The Maccabæan martyrs had threatened, or rather foretold, that "through the judgment of God he

should receive a just punishment for his pride," 2 Mac. vii. 36. and therefore, "when he called, God would not answer;" but (as the royal penman expressed) "laughed at his calamity, and mocked when his distress and anguish came upon him," Prov. i. 26, 27.

(c) 2 Maccab. ix.

(d) Lib. xii. c. 11.

(e) Μεγαλόψυχος καὶ φιλόδαρος.

cent; that he had conferred several benefits (a) upon the Jews, as this author of the book of the Maccabees makes him speak; that what severities he inflicted upon them were with a good intent (as Tacitus * reports) to cure them of their superstition, and to establish an uniformity of religion throughout his kingdom; and that, upon this account therefore, there was no reason for any remorse or recantation in him, or for any judgment from God in the singularity of his death.

From 1 Macc.
i. — vi. 7.
2 Macc. iii.—
x. and From
Jos. Hist. lib.
xi. c. 7. to
lib. xii. c. 14.

It might be thought fit, however, in a book designed on purpose to aggrandize the Jewish nation, (as the history of the Maccabees seems to be) to have every thing turn upon the marvellous. For is it not unaccountable, that Judas Maccabæus, with such an handful of men as the history gives him, should rout and destroy such multitudes of veteran troops, and that (b) without any swords or armour; and in one expedition fight battles, disperse armies, relieve some towns, take others by storm, and all this (c) without the loss of one man?

Is it not very wonderful, that the Jewish people (above all others) should be forewarned of an approaching war, or any other national (d) calamity, by apparitions in the air; or that at this time (above all others) they should have their temple secured from all profane and sacrilegious hands by a celestial guard of angels? Ptolemy Philopater might possibly be struck with the awfulness of the place, and so retire; but the adventure of (e) Heliodorus, and the angel mounted on horseback to guard the sacred treasures, while two others, on foot, were cutting and scourging him without mercy, seems to go beyond the extravagance of a romance, and makes the conduct of the elephants, (f) in sparing the poor Jews, and falling upon the spectators, less surprising."

OF what weight and authority both the history of the Maccabees, and that of the Jews by Josephus, ought to be accounted, we shall have occasion to enquire in the two following chapters, and need only here observe, that what the Maccabæan history has recorded of Antiochus Epiphanes is, in a great measure, confirmed by the testimony of Polybius, an exact historian, who was contemporary with him, and could not therefore be at a loss for proper instructions in what he wrote. Epiphanes (according to (g) him) was a man of great expence, and squandered away vast sums in the gratification of his lusts and amours, in the gifts he bestowed upon his favourites, and the entertainments he made for the people: But then Athenæus (h) informs us, "that all these expences were made, partly out of the gifts which his friends sent him, partly out of the prey which he took from Ptolemy king of Egypt when he was a minor, but chiefly out of the spoils of the many temples which he sacrilegiously robbed."

ANSWER.

(i) "I was bountiful and beloved in my power, and (k) I have done great benefits, both public and private, to the Jews." These were the vain boasts of the dying tyrant: But since the same Polybius (l) tells us that his distemper so far grew upon him as to come to a constant delirium or state of madness, these expressions, we may suppose, came from him (m) when he was in that condition. For we know no instances of his kindness, but many of his cruelty to the people of God; and as to his bounty (as he calls it), this is what he usually committed in his drunken frolics, (n) in which he spent a great part of his revenue, and used often to go out into the streets, and to scatter his money in handfuls among the rabble. We may therefore reasonably suppose that such a wild crack-brained creature as this, had seldom any serious thought of establishing an uniformity in religion (though that religion by the bye was impious) in his domi-

(a) 1 Maccab. iv. 26.

et mores Græcorum dare adnexus, quo minus teterrimam gentem in melius mutaret, Partharum bello prohibitus est, lib. v.

(e) Chap. iii. 24, &c.

Athenæum, lib. v.
cerptis Valesii.

(b) 1 Maccab. iv. 6.

(f) Chap. xi. 11.

(i) 1 Maccab. vi. 11.

(m) Calmet's Commentary.

* His words are these,—Rex Antiochus, demere superstitionem,

(c) Chap. v. 54.

(g) Deipnosoph. lib. vi.

(k) 2 Maccab. ix. 26.

(n) Athenæus, lib. x.

(d) 2 Maccab. v. 2, 3.

(h) Apud

(l) In Ex-

A. M. 3596,
&c. or 5070.
Ant. Chris.
408, &c.
or 341.

nions ; but that, to justify the depredations that he made upon the Jews, and to revenge the defeats which they had so frequently given to his armies, these were the true reasons of his exasperation against them ; because it is not conceivable how he could have any sober sense of religion, who, to satisfy his greedy avarice, was not afraid to rob the temple of Diana.

This robbing of temples, in the opinion of all sober heathens, was accounted a crime of that heinous nature as justly deserved the vengeance of heaven ; and therefore Polybius (*a*), as well as the author of the Maccabees, informs us, that Antiochus, before he died, was scared with visions and apparitions of evil spirits ; but then he supposes that it was the goddess Diana that thus haunted him, for his attempting to pillage her temple at Elymais ; whereas he himself, in the presence of all his friends, openly declares, that these troubles were come upon him, because (*b*) he “ had taken all the vessels of gold and silver that were in Jerusalem, and had destroyed the inhabitants of Judea without a cause.”

The sacrilege at Elymais was only intended, not executed ; but that at Jerusalem was committed, with horrid impiety against God, and as horrid cruelty against all those that served him there. But even if the former had been committed, it was only against a false deity ; whereas the latter was against the true God, the Great and Almighty Creator of heaven and earth : And therefore we need less wonder that the marks of a Divine infliction were so visible in the nature of his disease. Appian (*c*) and Polybius (*d*), as well as Josephus and the author of the books of the Maccabees, have informed us, that he died with ulcers and putrifying sores in his secret parts ; and upon this occasion we cannot forbear remarking, that most of the great persecutors of the church of God have been smitten in the like manner ; that thus died Herod, the great persecutor of Christ and of the infants at Bethlehem ; thus Galerius Maximianus, the author of the tenth and greatest persecution against the Christians ; and thus Philip the Second, king of Spain, who was as infamous for the cruelty of his persecutions, and the numbers destroyed by it, as any of the other three. (*e*) It is no small confirmation therefore of what the Jewish writers relate concerning the judgments of God upon Antiochus, that these heathen authors (whose credit is thought indubitable) do agree with them as to the matter of fact, though they differ from them in assigning a wrong cause for it.

(*f*) “ If you will walk in my statutes, and keep my commandments, and do them, ye shall chase your enemies, and they shall fall before you : Five of you shall chase an hundred, and an hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight, and your enemies shall fall before you by the sword.” This is the promise which God made to the children of Israel upon their entrance into the land of Canaan ; and in virtue of this promise we find that their leader Joshua was so very successful, that after he had relieved the city of Gibeon, destroyed twelve kings, and made himself master of their dominions, in one campaign only, it is said of him, that (*g*) “ he returned, and *all* Israel with him, unto the camp to Gilgal :” And therefore we need less wonder that the Jews, who at this time were under the conditions of God’s promise, nay, under a state of persecution upon the account of their religion, and were consequently the proper objects of his more immediate care and compassion, should come off victorious, even though they were but poorly armed, and sometimes without the loss of one man, having the Lord of Hosts on their side, both to inject terror into their enemies, and to “ cover their heads in the day of battle.” But, even without this supposition of a Divine interposal, might there not be some remarkable difference in the soldiers and generals themselves ?

Judas Maccabæus, an excellent commander, bold and enterprising, with a small body

(*a*) In *Excerptis Valesii*.
(*d*) In *Excerptis Valesii*.
(*g*) Josh. x. 43.

(*b*) 1 Maccab. vi. 12, 13.
(*e*) *Prideaux’s Connection*, Anno 164.

(*c*) In *Syriacis*.
(*f*) Lev. xxvi. 3, &c.

of men, but all determined to conquer or die, attacks one of no capacity, with a much larger army indeed, but made up chiefly of raw men, and forces levied in haste. He attacks him, I say, and defeats him; and are not miracles of this kind very common? Do not both ancient and modern history furnish us with victories, in great abundance, of this sort, and much more surprising than any obtained by the Maccabees? (a) The contempt of a weak enemy, whose forces are so disproportionate to the numerous army which comes against them, is one of the greatest errors, as well as dangers, that can happen in war; because, in this case, people are less upon their guard, not thinking the enemy capable of daring to undertake any thing against them, until they are surprised in their security; and an army surprised in their camp, we know, is an army half conquered.

From 1 Macc.
i. — vi. 7.
2 Macc. iii. —
x. and from
Jos. Hist. lib.
xi. c. 7. to
lib. xii. c. 14.

Though, therefore, the Jews, under the command of the gallant Judas, were always fewest in number, yet, considering the boldness of their undertakings, and the prudence of their conduct, their skill in the military art*, and the providence of God, which attended and prospered their arms, the wonder is not much, that they were, in a manner, always superior to their enemies.

“There shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars,” i. e. in the heavens, where they move, “and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity.” These were the presages which our Saviour foretold; and accordingly Josephus (b) informs us, that before the last siege of Jerusalem, there were seen in the air, a little before sun-set, for some days together, chariots and armed men passing along the clouds, round about the city; “which I would hardly venture to report,” says he, “but that I can produce sundry eye-witnesses that are still alive to confirm the truth of it.” Several accounts of this kind we have in Livy and Suetonius. And though it must be owned that too great a credulity in some historians may possibly have enlarged or multiplied these prodigies, yet we must not therefore imagine, that there never were any such things, because very good reasons may be given why God should exhibit them; and, as to the phenomena that (c) are now under consideration, they certainly have all the marks of credibility in them that we can well desire: For they are related by an author that was contemporary, or very near contemporary with them. They were seen, not transiently, and by a few weak superstitious people, but, for forty days together, they appeared to the view of a whole city, wherein were above an hundred thousand inhabitants, most of sound intellects, and some of them of so little superstition, as to abandon the laws and customs of their country for fear of persecution.

The Jews have a tradition, founded upon what we read in the 2d book of the Maccabees (d), viz. that, some time before the Babylonish captivity, the prophet Jeremiah received instructions from God to hide the ark of the covenant in a cave in Mount Nebo; which accordingly he did, and at the same time declared, that the place should not be discovered until the people's return from their captivity; that after the people's return, in the time of Nehemiah, this ark was found out, and replaced in the sanctuary of the temple; that when Pompey (e) entered the sanctuary, he saw an ark and cherubims like those which Moses had made; and that some time after the same ark was carried before Vespasian, when, from the Jewish wars, he returned to Rome in triumph.

Now, upon the supposition that there is any truth in this tradition, and the ark of the covenant was in fact replaced in the second temple, the history of Uzzah will in-

(a) *Calmet's Dictionary*, under the word *Bethzur*.

* It is indeed surprising that Polybius, an historian, in other things so punctual, and so well acquainted with the affairs of Asia, should make no mention of the Maccabees, nor of the wars which they maintained with so much glory against Antiochus and his successors, especially since he describes

the wars of the same Antiochus, in other respects, with all the care and exactness that can be desired. *Calmet's Dictionary* under the word *Modin*.

(b) *De Bello Jud.* lib. vii. c. 12.

(c) *Calmet's Commentary*.

(d) Chap. ii. 4—9.

(e) *Calmet's Diss. sur l'Arche d'Alliance*.

A. M. 3596,
&c. or 5070.
Ant. Chris.
408, &c.
or 341.

form us of what sacred account, in the esteem of God, this repository of the Divine covenant was, and how severely God, in this case, was pleased to avenge the least violation of it. For if the "anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzzah," so that he smote him dead upon the spot "for his rashness in taking hold of the ark," even because he was no priest, no descendant of the house of Aaron; why should it be thought a strange thing that God should shew some tokens of his displeasure against an heathen prince, intruding into the place which he had consecrated for his own presence and inhabitation? Or, if we suppose that the Shekinah, or presence of God, was not resident in the second temple; yet still the holy of holies was reserved for the entrance of none but the high priest; and therefore it is no more than what might be expected, that he who, in contempt of the Divine command, and the remonstrances of all about him, would intrude into it, should meet with some severe rebuke, that thereby he might be convinced of the power of the God of Israel, and of the Divine institution of their religion. And though it be acknowledged that Pompey met with no remarkable judgment in the instant when he was guilty of the like profanation, yet (*a*) our learned con- nector of the Sacred and profane history has observed, that after this act he never prospered; that this put an end to all his successes; insomuch, that this over the Jews was the last of his victories. So mindful has God all along been, not to suffer the profaners of his sanctuary to go unpunished!

The intended destruction of all the Egyptian Jews at Alexandria, in the barbarous manner wherein the author of the second book of the Maccabees has related it, can hardly be thought an incredible thing to those who have read in Philo (*b*) the like, if not worse, cruelties, which the same people underwent in the same town in the reign of Caligula, and under the administration of Flaccus.—That they were not only driven from their habitations, plundered of their goods, and cooped up in a narrow corner of the city in order to be starved; but that, if any attempting to make their escape were apprehended, they were either knocked on the head, torn limb from limb, or tortured to death, and their dead bodies dragged through the streets; and if any pretended to lament them, they were immediately seized, whipped without mercy, and having suffered all the torments that cruelty could invent, were condemned at last to be crucified:—That, without any regard to sex or condition, without any respect to the aged, or compassion to the young; not only whole families were burnt together, but some being tied to stakes, had fires of green wood kindled round them in order to prolong their torments, and that the spectators might have the horrid pleasure of seeing the poor creatures suffocated in the smoke.—That, on the very festival of the emperor's birth-day, which generally lasted for some time, thirty-eight of their council, persons of the most distinguished note among them, were bound like criminals, some with cords, and some with chains, and so dragged through the great market-place to the theatre, and there whipped so unmercifully, that some of them did not long survive it.—Nay, that at this time more especially, it was an usual thing with the people, when they came to the theatre, first to entertain themselves with scourging, racking, and torturing the poor Jews at their pleasure, and then to call for their dancers, and players, and other diversions in use among the Romans: whoever has read, I say, the account of these cruelties, as Philo has related them, need not much wonder to find an exasperated prince, as Ptolemy was, intending the total destruction of a people he imagined had offended him; when a bare Roman prefect (as Flaccus was no more), without any provocation that we hear of, was not afraid to treat the same people in this inhuman manner.

But then, as to the former case, if we will allow the Providence of God, and its interposition in the occurrences of this world, we need not want a reason why he should turn the elephants, which were designed to destroy the innocent, upon the spectators,

(*a*) Anno. 64.

(*b*) Vol. ii. p. 525, &c. Ex Edit. Mangeanâ,

who could not be so; because both his justice and mercy seem to plead for the deliverance of those whose only crime was their profession of his true religion, and for the punishment of such as came to glut their eyes with the hellish pleasure of seeing their fellow creatures trampled to pieces. In this sense there seems to be a necessary call for a Divine interposition; but, abstracted from this consideration, the wonder is not great, that creatures intoxicated (as these elephants are said to have been) should mistake their objects, and fall foul upon those that they were least of all intended to destroy. [Such events are, to every one who has resided in India, known to be, at this day, far from uncommon.]

There is something, we confess, more wonderful in the appearances of angels mounted, as it were, on horseback, (*a*) heading the Jewish army, (*b*) protecting the Jewish general, and (*c*) defending the sacred treasures of the temple; but as we esteem these books of the Maccabees no part of Divine Writ, we leave the proper defence of them to those who have received them as canonical, and shall only add, (*d*) with the learned Huetius, upon this subject,—That, how improbable soever these accounts may be thought by some, they are not destitute of examples of the like nature in several heathen histories; that in the battle which the Romans had with the Latins at the lake Regillus, Castor and Pollux were seen mounted on horse-back in the Roman army, and when the victory was wavering, they restored the fight, and gained the field, and carried the news thereof to Rome that very evening; that when the Romans invaded the Lucani and Brutii, Mars, the great founder of their nation, led their forces to the onset, and assisted them not a little in taking and destroying great numbers of their enemies; and, to name no more, that at the battle of Marathon, Pan appeared on the side of the Athenians; made great slaughter among the enemy's army; and injected such a terror into them all, as from that time has obtained the name of a panic fear.

Now, though there might be a good deal of fiction in these instances, yet, since we find some of the best Roman historians relating them, and so grave an author as Tully (even (*e*) in some of his most serious pieces) making mention of the first of these as a matter of just credibility, we cannot but suppose, that the common tradition at this time was, that to the victorious army (especially when it was much inferior in numbers) some celestial and superior beings were always assistant; and, consequently, that the author of the book of the Maccabees, in this respect, wrote nothing but what, at that time, was the common sense of mankind; nothing, indeed, but what the sense of the royal Psalmist in military matters authorised him to write: For (*f*) “let them be turned back, says he, and brought to confusion, that imagine mischief against me; let them be as the dust before the wind, and the angel of the Lord scattering them.”

DISSERTATION III.

OF THE JEWISH SANHEDRIM.

BEFORE we proceed to examine into this great national council among the Jews (which we suppose might have its rise much about this period of time), it may not be improper to take a short view of the sundry forms of civil administration that were previous to it.

(*a*) 2 Maccab. xi. 8.
Alnetance, lib. ii. c. 12.

(*b*) *Ibid.* ver. 10.

(*c*) Chap. iii. 25, &c.

(*d*) *Quæst.*

(*e*) *Tuscul. Quæst.* lib. i. et de Nat. Deor. lib. ii.

(*f*) *Psal.* xxxv. 4, 5.

A. M. 3596,
&c. or 5070.
Ant. Chris.
408, &c.
or 341.

The government of the Jewish republic was originally Divine: For (a) if we call a state where the people govern a democracy, and that where the nobles govern an aristocracy, there is the same reason why this should be styled a theocracy; because God was not only the Deity they were bound to worship and adore, but the Sovereign likewise, to whom they were to pay all the honours and rights that were due to Supreme Majesty. Their republic however was not completely settled, until God had given them the law from Mount Sinai, when the noise and thunders in which it was delivered were so very terrible, that (b) the people requested of him not to speak any more to them of himself, but to make use of the ministry of Moses as his interpreter.

Thus Moses, by the people's own election, was appointed to the administration of all public affairs; and in this important office, as the author of the Hebrews (c) testifies of him, acquitted himself with much faithfulness. But in a short time he found that he had undertaken a work of too much labour and fatigue for any single person to sustain; and therefore, in pursuance to his father-in-law's advice, he made choice of some of the most prudent and understanding men in every tribe, divided them into several classes, and gave them names according to the authority wherewith he invested them, or the number of the persons over whom they were to preside; (d) "He made them captains over thousands, and captains over hundreds, and captains over fifties, and captains over tens, and officers among the tribes."

But this establishment lasted not long, or at least received some change or addition to it. For as soon as the Israelites were arrived at Kibroth-Hattaavah, or the "Graves of Lust," as the place is called, but three days journey from Mount Sinai, (e) God appointed a body of seventy elders, to whom he communicated his spirit to assist Moses in bearing the burden of the people; and from hence it is, that the defenders of the antiquity of the Sanhedrim date the first institution of that great council. But, however this be, it is certain, that this council continued among them all the while that they sojourned in the wilderness; and was indeed (f) an institution proper enough for a people in their circumstances, who, being all of one community, could assemble together with ease, and, having no great matters in possession, could have but few processes, and consequently might dispense with a lesser number of judges.

Moses, however, foreseeing that this institution would not be sufficient when once the people were settled in the land of promise, (g) left it as an injunction behind him, that whoever had the government of the nation should appoint judges and magistrates in every city, to determine the controversies that came before them; but that, when any thing of great moment or of difficult discussion should happen, the contending parties should carry their cause (h) "to the place which the Lord had chosen, propose it to the priests and to the judge that should be in their days;" and upon pain of death acquiesce in their decision.

Moses was succeeded by Joshua: But his time was spent in making a conquest of the land of Canaan, and, till he had done that, he could not put the order which his predecessor had left him in execution. However, at his first accession to the government, we find that (i) all the people promised the same obedience to him that they had paid to Moses; and that, when himself grew old, (k) "he called for the elders of Israel, and for their heads, and for their judges, and for their officers," i. e. all the judges and magistrates which Moses had enjoined him to establish in the country, for the security of the state, and administration of justice.

On this footing Joshua left the civil administration; and thus it stood till the people revolted from the service of God, and then all things ran to confusion. In what man-

(a) *Lamy's* Introduction, lib. i. c. 11.

(d) Deut. i. 15.

(g) Deut. xvi. 18.

(e) Numb. xi. 16.

(h) Deut. xvii. 9.

(b) Exod. xx. 19.

(f) *Calmet's* Comment. sur la Police des Hebreux,

(i) Joshua i. 16, 17.

(c) Chap. iii. 2.

(k) Chap. xxiv. 1.

ner the state was governed, and justice dispensed, during the long succession of judges, it is difficult to determine. But towards the conclusion of that form of government, we find Samuel (a) "going from year to year in a circuit round the country to judge Israel," and, when himself grew impotent and unable to travel, (b) "making his sons judges in his stead;" but their male-administration occasioned an alteration in the government.

From 1 Macc.
i. — vi. 7.
2. Macc. iii.—
x. and from
Jos. Hist. lib.
xi. c. 7. to
lib. xii. c. 14.

The institution of regal power dissolved that polity which Moses had settled: But though he both foreknew and foretold this change in the constitution, yet we no where find him giving any particular directions how kings were to conduct themselves in the administration of the state, and the dispensation of justice; (c) whether it was, that God did not vouchsafe to communicate any fresh discovery to him upon that subject, or whether he might think, that the rules which he had already prescribed were not incompatible with the authority and government of kings.

Saul seems to have concerned himself with nothing but military affairs, leaving the priests and judges the same jurisdiction that they had before; but David, when he came into a peaceable possession of the kingdom, (d) did himself (in causes of great consequence at least) administer justice to the people. The famous decision between the two mothers, (e) who both laid their claim to the living child, is a plain proof that, in perplexed and intricate cases, Solomon himself did sometimes the office of a judge; and when we read of this prince, that he came to (f) "Gibeon, with the captains of thousands and of hundreds, with the judges, and the chief of the fathers," we may learn from hence, that magistrates of the same kind that Moses had ordained were at this time existing in the kingdom of Israel. [The truth is, as has been already proved, that the constitution of Israel suffered no essential change. Under the kings, as they were called, it was as much a theocracy as under the judges; for, as neither judge nor king could abrogate a single law of the kingdom, they were in fact nothing more than God's vicegerents in the executive power.]

By the revolt of the ten tribes from the house of David to that of Jeroboam, the civil constitution of the Israelites suffered very much; because the avowed purpose of that prince was, to change the religion and reverse the orders which Moses had instituted: And therefore, from henceforward, we must look only into the kingdom of Judah for the succession of the true discipline and form of ancient government of the Jews.

When Jehoshaphat formed the design of introducing a reformation both in church and state, he pursued the rule which Moses had given him; for (g) "he set judges in the land, through all the fenced cities," and in Jerusalem the capital, erected two tribunals; (h) one composed of priests and Levites, to hear appeals from lesser courts relating to religious matters; and the other, composed of the chief of the fathers of Israel, to hear such as related to civil. Nor is their conjecture much amiss, who suppose, that the seventy men whom (i) Ezekiel saw in a vision burning incense to idols, and the five and twenty, who, (k) "between the porch and the altar were worshipping the sun in the East," are the rather mentioned, because they were men of eminence, and very probably the judges of civil and ecclesiastical matters.

What kind of judicature prevailed in the time of the captivity, it is difficult to say. From the story of Susannah we may learn that, in these circumstances, the Jews were allowed their own courts and judges, even in Babylon itself; but of what number, order, or authority these judges were, none can tell. It is plain, however, that upon the restoration, Ezra returned with full power from Artaxerxes, (l) "to set magistrates and judges in all the land," who might punish criminals according to their demerit, ei-

(a) 1 Sam. vii. 15, 16.

(b) Chap. vii. 1.

(c) Calmet's Dissert. sur la Police des Hebreux.

(d) 2 Sam. xv. 2.

(e) 1 Kings iii. 16, &c.

(f) 2 Chron. i. 2.

(g) Chap. xix. 5.

(h) Ibid. ver. 8.

(i) Ezek. viii. 11.

(k) Ibid. ver. 16.

(l) Ezra vii. 25, 26.

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or 341.

ther with death or banishment, imprisonment, or confiscation of goods. And in this condition the Jewish state continued, viz. in the form of an aristocracy, (*a*) with the high priest at the head of it, sometimes under the king of Egypt, and sometimes under the king of Syria, for a considerable time after the return from the captivity.

The persecution which Antiochus Epiphanes raised among the Jews, ruined all the economy of their government: But Mattathias and his sons endeavoured to restore (*b*) the decayed state of the people (as it is called) as far as those troublesome times would permit them. Judas Maccabæus, in a general assembly held at Maspha, revived the ancient order, and appointed rulers (*c*) "over the people, even captains over thousands, over hundreds, over fifties, and over tens:" And when Jonathan, his brother and successor, took upon him both the sovereign and sacerdotal authority, he, nevertheless, governed by the advice of a senate, not excluding the people from some share in their deliberations, as appears by the letters (*d*) which the Jews at this time sent to the Lacedæmonians.

Aristobulus, who was the first of the Asmonæan race that took upon him the diadem and title of a king, continued the senate in great authority, but excluded the common people from having any part in the administration; as the kings who succeeded him endeavoured to confirm their own power by curtailing that of the senate till Pompey came, and quite overturned the Jewish state, by subjecting it to the empire, and making Judea a Roman province.

From this short review of the Jewish republic, we may perceive, that its form of government, at different times, has been various; that Moses (with the concurrence of seventy chief magistrates) as God's vicegerent, governed the people in an absolute manner; that, under the judges, the state had been sometimes without any ruler at all, independent sometimes, and at other times under the jurisdiction of its enemies; that the ancient kings of Judah vouchsafed to administer justice to their subjects, but that towards the decline of the kingdom, its princes affected state and a despotic power; that from the captivity to the time of the Asmonæans, the government under the high priest was partly aristocratical and partly popular; and that the Asmonæan kings made it monarchical, till the Romans destroyed it. And so we proceed to consider in which of these periods the famous council of the Jews, which is usually called their *Sanhedrim*, might have its rise, with some other particulars relating to its authority and proceedings.

When Moses, in conducting the children of Israel through the wilderness, was teased and wearied out (as we say) with the perpetual complaints and murmurings of that people, in the impatience of his soul he addressed himself to God in these words: (*e*) "Wherefore hast thou afflicted thy servant, that thou layest the burden of all this people upon me?—I am not able to bear all this people alone, because it is too heavy for me," &c. Whereupon the Lord said unto him, "Gather unto me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom thou knowest to be the elders of the people, and officers over them, and bring them unto the tabernacle of the congregation, that they may stand there with thee; and I will come down and talk with thee there; and I will take of the spirit which is upon thee, and will put it upon them, and they shall bear the burden with thee, that thou bear it not thyself alone." This command Moses took care to put in execution: The elders accordingly met at the "tabernacle of the congregation; and when the Spirit of the Lord rested upon them, they prophesied, and did not cease." These words (as we said before) are held by the generality of the Rabbins (as well as by some Christian writers) to be the true origin of that great Sanhedrim "which, from its first institution here under Moses, subsisted all along in the Jewish nation, even to

(*a*) Rather a *Theocracy*, since the high priest was at the head of it.
(*c*) Ibid. ver. 55.

(*d*) Ibid. xiv. 19.

(*e*) Numb. xi. 11, &c.

(*b*) 1 Maccab. iii. 43.

the time of their utter dispersion under Vespasian, and had the cognizance of all matters of the greatest moment, both civil and ecclesiastical.”

But for the better understanding of the sense and design of them, we may observe, first, That Moses does not here speak of the difficulty or multiplicity of business that was laid upon him, but of the perverse temper of the people, always addicted to mutiny and sedition, which he himself alone was not able to withstand. To ease himself of the labour of judging the people in all civil and capital causes, he had, by the advice of his father-in-law, (a) appointed a certain number of judges; and it seems not unlikely that some of these seventy were of the number of these judges, because they are called by God himself “the elders and officers of the people.” Moses wanted no assistance therefore in the administration of affairs of this nature; but what he wanted was a sufficient number of persons, of such power and authority among the people, as might restrain them from seditious practices, and awe them into obedience; and for this reason it was, that God, when he made choice of them, gave them the spirit of prophecy, as an evident sign of his having appointed them coadjutors to Moses, in the exercise of his supreme authority, and as a means to procure them the greater reverence and esteem among the people.

Secondly, We may observe farther, that it does not appear from the foregoing passage, that this assembly of seventy persons was to be perpetuated in the Jewish state, and when any died, others substituted in their room; on the contrary, it rather seems to have been an occasional institution, or present expedient for the relief of Moses, that by the addition of other rulers, (all endued with gifts extraordinary as well as he) the murmurs and complaints of the people might not fall all upon him, but be diverted (some of them at least) upon others; and that by the joint influence of so many persons, all possessed with the spirit of government, they might either hinder or appease them. And as this was an institution only for that purpose, there is no reason to believe that it continued any longer than Moses lived; because, if we take a view of the history of succeeding ages, we shall find no footsteps of it.

After the death of Moses, we find Joshua ruling the people with an absolute authority; settling the portions of the several tribes in the land of Canaan; dismissing those who had assisted their brethren in the conquest of it; receiving all appeals, redressing all grievances, and acting, in short, as the only governor in the nation, without one word mentioned of any supreme council to controul him. After the death of Joshua, God raised up judges, men of courage and wisdom extraordinary, to deliver his people from the oppressions of their enemies, and to attend to the administration of justice among them; and yet we read of no act or decree of this pretended Sanhedrim all this while, (b) which could no more have been omitted in the account of these times, had it been then existing, than the mention of the Roman senate is in any of their historians.

(c) In those days, as the sacred history informs us, “there was no king in Israel, but every man did what was right in his own eyes.” And (d) where then was this venerable assembly, whose authority (according to the Rabbins) was superior to that of princes, to interpose in this time of need? The Jews certainly could never have degenerated into such a state of licentiousness, had there been a court of seventy, or seventy-two elders chosen out of every tribe, and invested with a supreme authority to punish criminals and reform abuses; nor can we see what reason the Levite had to cut in pieces the body of his concubine, abused by the Gibeonites, and to send it to the several tribes in demand of Justice, if there had been such a constant tribunal as this is represented to resort to.

(a) Exod. xviii. 24.

(b) *Le Clerc's* Dissert. de Synedrio.

[(c) Judg. xxi. 25.

(d) Sentimens de quelques Theologiens sur l'Hist. Critique, let. 10.

A. M. 3596,
&c. or 5070.
Ant. Chris.
408, &c.
or 341.

The kings who succeeded the judges, acted in such a manner as to make us believe that there was no such thing as a Sanhedrim then in being. (a) They displaced high * priests without opposition; they waged war without advising with any; they made and deposed judges as they pleased; and in short did every thing that other princes are wont to do, without the Sanhedrim's ever interposing its authority, that we read of, to stop the course of their extravagances, or curb their exorbitant power. Some of these kings, we know, were for extinguishing the true worship of God, and establishing idolatry in its stead. Here then was a proper opportunity for this venerable body to step in, by condemning idolatry in some public act of theirs, and opposing the innovations of the court. But of this we hear not one word; neither do we find that (b) the prophets, who so severely inveighed against the wickedness of the people, ever referred them to the Sanhedrim, or complained that that court was too remiss or negligent in the punishment of crimes.

If ever mention were to be made of this great council, it would be, one would think, in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, which were written after the Babylonish captivity, when there was no king in the land, and consequently a fit opportunity for this Sanhedrim to appear; and yet, even here, we find several matters of great moment transacted, such as the reformation of the people's manners, the dissolution of illegal marriages, a stop put to the profanation of the Sabbath, and a covenant of obedience to God made and signed by the deputies of the priests, Levites, and common people; but not one word of the great Sanhedrim all this while.

In short, not only the sacred writers, but even Josephus, Philo, Origen, Eusebius, and St Jerom, who were all well versed in the ancient government of the Jews, make no manner of mention of any such body of men in the times that we are now upon; and therefore we cannot but think, that this universal silence in writers of all kinds, is a very good argument that this supreme national council did not then subsist. Its name is confessedly of Greek derivation; to which purpose Livy (c) observes, that those senators whom the Macedonians intrusted with the administration of their government, were called Synedri: and therefore it seems somewhat incongruous to look into the first centuries of the Jewish church for the original of a council whose very name is of later extract.

Before the times of the Gospel, wherein frequent mention is made of this council, we find it in so great authority, as even to call Herod (d) (though then governor of Galilee) upon his trial for some misdemeanour: and therefore it is no improbable conjecture, that in the time of the Maccabees, either Judas or Jonathan was the first institutor of it; and the reason they might have for this institution might be the change which they had made in the nature of the government, for which they wanted the consent of the people, or at least of a body that represented them, that thereby they might act with more authority: and though as yet they did not assume the title of kings, yet they thought it a matter of prudence to have their resolutions ratified by a council.

The Maccabees, who in all probability were the first institutors of this council, would hardly exclude themselves from it; and therefore we may presume, that the high priest was the settled president, who for that reason was called Nasi, or prince of the Sanhedrim, and in his absence had a deputy called Abbeth-din, "or father of the house of judgment," and a sub-deputy, called Chacam, i. e. the wise; but all the rest had the common name of elders or senators.

* [I do not recollect that any of them, before the captivity, displaced high priests, except Solomon, who banished *Abiathar*, for his crimes, from the temple, where alone he could officiate, and put into his place *Zadoc*, who appears to have been the heir of *Phineas*, and therefore the rightful high priest.]

(a) *Calmet's Dissert. sur la Police des Hebreux.*

(b) *Basnage's Hist. lib. v. c. 1.*

(c) Pronunciatur quod ad statum Macedoniae pertinebat, senatores, quos Synedros vocant, legandos esse, quorum consilio res publica administratur, lib. xlv. c. 32.

(d) *Jewish Antiq. lib. xiv. c. 17.*

These senators (which were usually taken from other inferior courts) were to be, some priests, and some laymen, but all persons of untainted birth, good learning, and profound knowledge in the law, both written and traditional. All eunuchs, usurers, gamblers, those that brought up pigeons to decoy others to their dove-houses, or made any gain of their fruits in the Sabbatical year, all old men, deformed persons, and such as had no children, (because they were suspected of being cruel and hard hearted) were excluded from this council; and those only who were of mature age, competent fortunes and comely personages, were admitted to it.

From 1 Macc.
i.—vi. 7.
2 Macc. iii.—
x. and from
Jos. Hist. lib.
xi. c. 7. to
lib. xii. c. 14.

The room in which this council met was a rotunda, half of which was built without the temple and half within. The Nasi, or prince of the council, sat upon a throne elevated above the rest at the upper end of the room, having his deputy on his right-hand, and his sub-deputy on his left. The senators were ranged in order on each side; and the secretaries, who were to record the matters that came before them, were three; whereof one wrote the sentences of those that were absolved, the other had the condemnations under his care, and the third entered into their books the several pleadings of all contending parties.

The vanity and ridiculous pride of the Rabbins appear in nothing more than in the excessive power which they give to this high court of judicature. For, according to them, it not only decided such causes as were brought before it, by way of appeal from other inferior courts, but had under its jurisdiction likewise † the king, the high priest, and prophets. (a) The king, for instance, if he offended against the law, if he married above eighteen wives, if he kept too many horses, if he hoarded up too much gold or silver, the Sanhedrim had him stripped and whipped in their presence. But whipping, it seems, among the Jews (b) was not so ignominious a thing, but that the king bore it by way of penance, with great patience, and himself made choice of the person that was to exercise this discipline upon him. However this be, it is certain, that all private controversies of difficult discussion, all matters relating to religion, and all important affairs of state, were submitted to the determination of this august assembly, from whose sentence no appeal could be made, because a demurring to the jurisdiction of their court was punished by death, i. e. while the power of life and death was in their hands; but how long this lasted after that Judea became a Roman province, has been a matter of some dispute among the learned.

Josephus (c) tells us expressly, that the senate and emperors of Rome took no ancient rights from the nations whom they conquered; and by the words of Pilate concerning our Saviour Christ, (d) “Take ye him, and judge him according to your law,” it seems as though they still retained their power, though perhaps it might be under some limitations.

Upon St Peter’s (e) speech before the great council, we find them so exasperated against the apostles, that they began to think of putting them all to death, and might, very probably, have proceeded in their design, had they not been dissuaded from it by the wise advice of Gamaliel. The stoning of St Stephen was not the effect of any hasty judgment of some zealots, but of the regular proceedings of this court. He (f) “was brought before the council, we read; false witnesses,” accusing him of blasphemy, were

† This is directly the opinion of Maimonides, (in Sanhed. per. 2, 3.) but that learned Rabbi was strangely prejudiced in favour of this great council; and though Josephus is of the same opinion, yet to allow such an extent of jurisdiction to this court, so as to inflict corporal punishment upon the persons of their kings, is contrary to the general notions of sovereignty, and the laws of all kingdoms and nations; besides that, the Holy Scriptures are absolutely silent in this

particular, and nothing can be inferred from them to countenance such a coercive power. *Lewis’s Hebrew Antiq.* vol. i. c. 6.

(a) *Calmet’s Dissert. sur la Police des Hebreux.*

(b) *Calmet’s Dictionary*, under the word *Sanhedrim*.

(c) *Contra Apion, Jewish Antiq.* lib. ii. c. 17.

(d) *John xviii.* 31.

(e) *Acts v.* 29, &c.

(f) *Acts vi.* 12, &c.

A. M. 3596. produced against him; in his own defence, he made a long discourse; but his own defence was not admitted, nor his innocence acknowledged; and therefore they sentenced him to be stoned (a) according to the law.
 &c. or 5070.
 Ant. Chris.
 408, &c.
 or 34

St Paul himself declares before this very court, that before his conversion to Christianity, (b) he "persecuted those of that way unto death, and received letters from the estates of the elders or the Sanhedrim, to bring Christians from Damascus to Jerusalem in bonds, in order to be punished." Tertullus, who in the trial of this apostle was council for the Sanhedrim, (c) tells Felix, the governor of Judea, that having apprehended the criminal at the bar, they thought to have proceeded against him "according to their law; but that the chief captain, Lysias, came upon them, and took him out of their hands."

The true reason why Lysias exerted his power upon this occasion, and took him out of their hands, was, because they had accused him, not only of blasphemy and profanation of their temple, but of sedition likewise, which was a crime falling more properly under the cognisance of the civil government, and for which Paul was therefore brought before Felix, Festus, and Agrippa. (d) So that from an examination of these particulars, wherein the power of the Sanhedrim was concerned, we may conclude, that even after the subjection of the Jewish state to the Roman empire, this Sanhedrim had the power of life and death in crimes committed against their own law; but that in matters of sedition, and crimes committed against the civil administration, the Roman governors interposed their authority, and in cases of this nature took the dispensation of justice out of their hands.

(e) What formality was observed in bringing a law-suit before the Sanhedrim, Maimonides has in this manner described:—"The business, says he, was first to be examined in the inferior courts; but if it could not be decided there, the judges sent to Jerusalem to consult the judgment-chamber, that sat upon the mount of the temple. From this first tribunal they proceeded to that which sat at the temple-gate; and if the matter was not determined there, they came at last to the great council-chamber, which was held in one of the apartments belonging to the temple; and this last council determined with so much justice and authority, that there were no divisions seen, during all the time that the second temple lasted. And what caution was taken, in passing the sentence of death upon criminals, by the same tribunal, the Jewish doctors (if we will believe them) have thus informed us.—"After the witnesses were heard, and the matter in question decided, the judge put off the sentence till next morning. Hereupon the Sanhedrim went home, ate but little, drank no wine, and then met again, two by two, in order to weigh all the particulars of the trial. The next morning, he that had given his opinion for condemning of the criminal had power to revoke it; but he who had once given it for absolving him could not alter his mind. As soon as the judge had pronounced sentence, the malefactor was conducted to the place of execution, while an herald, on horseback, proclaimed as he went along, 'Such an one is condemned for such a crime; but if any body can allege any thing in his behalf, let him speak.' If it happened that any one came to the gate of the court, the door-keeper made a sign to the herald to bring back the malefactor, while two judges were appointed to receive what his friend had to say in his favour, and to consider whether there was any thing material in it."

These formalities are indeed related in the Mishnah; but it is much to be questioned whether they were not invented since, on purpose to recommend the justice and equity of the ancient Jewish tribunals. For, besides that no other nation did ever yet observe such favourable proceedings, in relation to those that were found guilty, there is not the

(a) Deut. xvii. 7.
 et L'enfant's Preface Generale sur le Nov. test.

(b) Acts xxii. 4, &c.

(c) Chap. xxiv. 6, 7.

(d) Vid. Beausobre

(e) Basnage's History of the Jews, lib. v. c. 2.

least mention of any thing of this kind in the Sacred History; and in the Talmud itself we meet with maxims and matter of fact quite contrary to it. For (a) therein we are told, that though a prisoner declare upon oath, at the place of execution, that he was innocent, and in confirmation of this the false witnesses recanted; yet the judges took no notice of their retraction, but only said, "Let the false witnesses perish; but a judge cannot recal his sentence when once it is pronounced."

From 1 Macc.
i. — vi. 7.
2 Macc. iii.—
x. and from
Jos. Hist. lib.
xi. c. 7. to
lib. xii. c. 14.

Upon the whole, therefore, we may observe, that what the Jewish doctors tell us of the origin and succession, the authority and proceedings of their Sanhedrim, is in a great measure fabulous; that the council of seventy men, which God instituted in the wilderness, was designed only to serve a particular purpose, and was therefore of short continuance in the Jewish state; that from the time of Joshua till after the return from the Babylonish captivity, there are no footsteps to be found, either in sacred or profane history, of such an assembly as the Rabbins represent their Sanhedrim to have been; but that in the times of the Maccabees, we read of the senate of the nation, which, under the Asmonæan princes, grew into great power, and in the days of our Saviour's ministry had matters of the highest consequence committed to their determination; till in the final destruction of Jerusalem, and the dispersion of the Jewish nation, the very name and authority of that senate was entirely lost.

CHAPTER IV.

FROM THE DEATH OF ANTIOCHUS EPIPHANES TO THAT OF JOHN HYRCANUS.

THE HISTORY.

AFTER the death of Antiochus Epiphanes (b), his son Antiochus Eupater (a minor of nine years old) succeeded in the throne of Syria. His father, upon his death-bed, had constituted Philip, one of his chief favourites, regent of the kingdom during the minority of his son, and had delivered to him his crown, his signet, and other ensigns of royalty, giving him strict charge to educate him in such a manner as would qualify him to reign well; but Philip, when he came to Antioch, found his office usurped by another. For Lysias, who in the king's absence was left governor in chief, hearing of the death of Epiphanes, took Antiochus his son, who was then under his care, and having placed him on the throne, assumed to himself the tuition of his person and the government of his kingdom, without any manner of regard to the will and appointment of the late king: And Philip, finding himself too weak at present to contest it with him, fled

From 1 Macc.
v. 1. 2 Macc.
x. 11. and
Jos. lib. xii.
c. 14. to the
end of 1 and
2 Macc. and
of Jos. lib.
xiii. c. 19.

(a) *Ex Gemerâ*, Tit. Sanhed. c. 6. f. 4.
Joseph. Antiq. lib. xii. c. 14.

(b) 1 Maccab. vi. 17. 2 Maccab. x. 10, 11. and

A. M. 3841, into Egypt, in hopes of procuring some assistance there, which would enable him, at one time or other, to make good his claim.

&c. or 5247.
Ant. Chris.
163, &c.
or 164.

(a) Not long after the death of Epiphanes, Judas Maccabæus, hearing of the confederacy which the neighbouring nations were engaged in, viz. to destroy and extirpate the whole race of Israel, and that they had already begun to cut off as many as were within their power, (b) marched first against the Idumæans, who were the forwardest in the conspiracy, and having fallen into that part of their country which was called Acrabatene †, he there slew twenty thousand of them. He next fell upon (c) the children of Bean †², another tribe of these Idumæans, and having vanquished them in the field, pursued them to their fortresses, which he besieged, took, and therein slew twenty thousand more. He then passed over the Jordan into the land of the Ammonites, wherein he defeated them in several engagements; slew great numbers of them; took Jahazah †³ and its appendant villages; and after his return to Judea, when Timotheus, the governor in those parts, pretended to follow him with a numerous army, he fell upon him and overthrew him with a great slaughter, so that himself was forced to flee to Gazara, a city in the tribe of Ephraim, where his brother Chereas was governor: But Judas pursuing him thither, beset the place, took it in five days, and there slew Chereas, Timotheus, and Apollophanes another great captain of the Syrian forces.

In the mean time the heathen nations about Galaad (d) had fallen upon the Jews that dwelt in the land of Tob, which lay on the east of Gilead; had slain to the number of a thousand men; taken their goods for a spoil; and carried away their wives and children into captivity: Whereupon most of the other Jews inhabiting those parts betook themselves to a strong fortress in Gilead, called Dathema, with a resolution to defend themselves. This when the heathens understood, they drew together in a great body, under the command of Timotheus, the successor and (very probably) the son of the late Timotheus, who was slain at Gazara, in order to besiege them, while the inhabitants of Tyre, Sidon, Ptolemais, and other parts thereabout, were laying their schemes to cut off all the Jews that were in Galilee; so that Judas was sent to, both from Gilead and Galilee, to come to the succour and assistance of his poor distressed countrymen.

(e) In this critical juncture of affairs, he consulted the Sanhedrim or general council of the nation; and, by their advice, divided his army into three parts. With the first, which consisted of eight thousand men, he and Jonathan, his brother, marched for the relief of the Gileadites: With the second, consisting of three thousand, Simon, another of his brothers, was sent into Galilee; and the rest were left at Jerusalem, under the command of Joseph, for the defence of the place and the country adjacent, but with a strict charge from Judas not to enterprise any thing against the enemy, but to stand wholly upon the defensive, until he and Simon should return again.

(f) Judas and Jonathan, passing the Jordan and marching into Gilead, had intelligence that at Bassora, a town of the Edomites, a great number of Jews were imprisoned, in order to be destroyed as soon as Dathema was taken: Whereupon, by hasty marches, they came upon the city sooner than was expected, and having slain all the

(a) 1 Maccab. v. 1, &c.

(b) 2 Maccab. x. 14, 15.

† It is a canton of Judea, upon the frontiers of Idumea, towards the southern extremity of the Dead Sea.

(c) 1 Maccab. v. 4, 5.

†² Who these children of Bean were it is difficult to say. Some think that this Bean was the name of an ancient king, whose descendants lived in hostility with the children of Israel; but others, with more probability, account it the name of a place; and if in

the confines of the Dead Sea there was, as some affirm, a city of this name, without all controversy this was it. *Calmet's Commentary* on 1 Maccab. v. 4.

†³ This city, which lay beyond the Jordan, was first of all given to the tribe of Gad, and afterwards to the Levites, Joshua xxi. 36. It was situated at the foot of the mountains of Gilead, near the brook Jahazah, which forms a rivulet or torrent that falls into the Jordan.

(d) 1 Maccab. v. 9—13.

(f) Ibid. ver. 24, &c.

(e) Ibid. ver. 16, 17.

males, taken their spoils, and freed their brethren, they set it on fire, and so proceeded in their way to Dathema. On the morning when they arrived (for they marched all night), Timotheus and his men had begun to storm the place; but Judas, coming upon them when they little expected so sudden and violent an assault, put them all to the rout, and in the pursuit slew eight thousand of them. He thence marched his army from place to place, where he understood that any Jews were oppressed or imprisoned; and having treated them in the same manner as he did Bassora, slain all the males, taken their spoils, and set their cities on fire, he returned to Jerusalem.

From 1 Macc. v. 1. 2 Macc. x. 11. and Jos. lib. xii. c. 14. to the end of 1 and 2 Macc. and of Jos. lib. xiii. c. 19.

While Judas and his brother Jonathan were thus successful in Gilead, the other brother Simon was not idle in Galilee. For he defeated the enemy (a) in several encounters, drove them out of the country, and pursued them with a great slaughter to the very gates of Ptolemais; and being now ready to return, he took along with him all the Jews, men, women, and children, that he could find in those parts, because he thought them too far distant from Jerusalem to be under the eye and protection of their brethren; and, having brought them safe into Judea, with them he re peopled those places which had been desolated by the enemy during the persecution of Antiochus Epiphanes.

(b) Joseph, who, with the remainder of the army, was left in Jerusalem, hearing of these great successes in Gilead and Galilee would needs be doing something; and therefore, contrary to the orders that had been given him, led forth the forces on an ill-projected expedition against Jamnia, a sea-port on the Mediterranean, thinking to take the place: but Gorgias, who commanded in those parts for the king of Syria, fell upon Joseph's army; put them to flight, and, in the pursuit, slew about two thousand of them, which rash attempt ended in the confusion of those that undertook it; for Judas had given contrary orders, and by his wise conduct, and undaunted bravery, was everywhere attended with success.

Enraged at these successes, Lysias (c), who was commander-in chief of the Syrian forces, having raised an army of eighty thousand men, marched against Judas, with all the horse of the kingdom, and eighty elephants, and coming to Bethzura, thought it necessary to take that place in his way; but while he was besieging it, Judas came upon him, and, having slain eleven thousand foot, and sixteen hundred horse, put the rest of his army to flight: So that Lysias, who with much ado escaped to Antioch, growing weary of so unprosperous a war, and not knowing where to raise fresh recruits, made a peace with Judas and his people, whereby the decree of Antiochus Epiphanes, obliging them to conform to the religion of the Greeks, was rescinded, and a liberty granted them to live according to their own laws.

This peace was ratified by Antiochus Eupater, but it did not last long, (d) because the governors of the several neighbouring places did not like it. The people of Joppa were the first that broke it, by drowning in the sea two hundred of the Jews who lived among them in that city: but Judas severely revenged their cruelty; for, falling upon them by night, he burnt their shipping; put all to the sword that had escaped the fire, and then hearing that the people of Jamnia had but badly entreated the Jews, he set fire to that haven likewise, and burnt all the ships in it.

Timotheus was one of those governors that was dissatisfied with the peace; and therefore, when Judas understood that he had drawn all his forces together, (e) to the number of an hundred and twenty thousand foot, and two thousand five hundred horse; and that he was going to give the Jews in Gilead fresh vexations, he marched against him; and having defeated a strong party of wandering Arabs † in his way, and made peace

(a) 1 Maccab. v. 21, &c.

(c) 2 Maccab. xi. 1, &c.

(e) 1 Maccab. v. 37, &c.

(b) Ibid. 55, &c.

(d) Chap. xii. 2, &c.

2 Macc. xii. 20—23.

† These people lived in tents, and stayed in a place no longer than it afforded them provision for

themselves and their cattle. They were the descendants of Ishmael, and according to the angel's prediction of them, Gen. xvi. 12. "Their hand was against every man, and every man's hand against them," for they lived chiefly upon plunder; but as they were

A. M. 3841,
&c. or 5247.
Ant. Chris.
163, &c.
or 164.

with them, he first took the city of Caspis †, slew the inhabitants, and destroyed the place; then attacked Caraca, which was garrisoned with ten thousand men, whom he put to the sword; and at last, coming up with Timotheus near a place called Raphon, on the river Jabboc, he there gave him battle, slew of his army thirty thousand men, and (a) took him prisoner; but upon condition that he should release all the Jews that were captives in any places under his command, he gave him both his life and his liberty. Understanding, however, that a great part of the vanquished army had fled to Carnion, a city in Arabia, he pursued them thither, and, having taken the place, slew twenty-five thousand more of Timotheus's forces that had there taken refuge.

In his return to Jerusalem, he took along with him all the Jews that were in the land of Gilead, for the same reason that Simon had carried them out of the land of Galilee the year before, viz. to inhabit and fortify the cities of Judea, which were not sufficiently peopled: (b) But being in his way to pass through Ephron †², a strong city, and well garrisoned by Lysias, the people refused to open their gates; whereupon he assaulted the place, and, having taken it by storm, put all the males (to the number of twenty-five thousand persons) to the sword, took their spoils, and razed the city to the ground. After this, repassing Jordan, and returning to Jerusalem, (c) he and his company went up to the temple to give God thanks for the great success wherewith he had been pleased to prosper this expedition, and for his singular and wonderful protection of them, in that, notwithstanding all the hazardous enterprises they had been engaged in, they had not so much as lost one man.

This continued series of success gave Judas (d) encouragement to carry the war into the southern parts of Idumea, where he took and dismantled Hebron, the metropolis thereof; and thence passing into the land of the Philistines, took Azotus, formerly called Ashdod; pulled down their heathen altars, burnt their carved images, and spoiled the place; and having done the like to all the other cities of that country where he prevailed, he led his victorious army, laden with the spoils of their enemies, back again to Judea.

But notwithstanding all these successes, the Jews could not call themselves entirely masters of Jerusalem. The fortress of Arca (e) still held out for the king of Syria; and the garrison, consisting of Macedonians and renegade Jews, was very troublesome to such as resorted to the temple. Judas therefore thought it highly necessary to attempt the reduction of the place; and having got engines †³ and machines for that purpose, he soon straitened the garrison. The besieged, however, found means to acquaint king Antiochus with their distress, who promised to relieve them, and for that end gathered an army of an hundred and ten thousand foot, twenty thousand horse, thirty-two elephants with castles on their backs full of archers, and three hundred armed chariots of war. With all this force Antiochus, marching to the relief of the fortress of Jerusalem, passed through Idumea, where, in his way, he laid siege to Bethzura, which made a brave defence; for the inhabitants, by bold sallies, so burnt and disordered his engines, that he spent much time about it to no purpose. Judas all this while pressed the for-

a stout and warlike people, and well acquainted with the course of those countries, it was no bad policy in the Jewish general, after he had forced them to sue for peace, and had obliged them to furnish him with a certain quantity of cattle and provisions, to secure their friendship and future services. 2 Maccab. xii. 11. *Universal History*, lib. ii. c. 11.

† This is the same as Heshbon in the tribe of Reuben.

(a) 2 Maccab. xi. 24, 25.

(b) 1 Maccab. v. 46, &c. 2 Maccab. xii. 27, 28.

†² The Scripture makes mention of this city of

Ephron, as standing upon the Jordan, only in this place; and therefore it is hard to define its particular situation.

(c) 1 Maccab. v. 54.

(d) Ibid. ver. 65—68.

(e) Chap. vi. 19, &c.

†³ These (in Jeremiah vi. 6) are rendered in the margin engines of shot, and without doubt resembled, in some measure, the *ballistæ* and *catapultæ* among the Romans, which were used for throwing stones and arrows, and were to them of old instead of mortars and carcases. *Lewis's Jewish Antiq.* lib. vi. c. 46.

treass of Acra with all his might ; but fearing lest the Bethzurians should be forced to submit to the superior strength of the enemy, he left the siege of it, and went to the relief of them.

(a) His intent was to surprise the king's forces; and therefore marching in the night, he fell upon one quarter of the army in the dark; killed four thousand of them; and, having put the whole army into confusion, retreated on break of day without suffering any loss. In the morning, when both sides prepared for an open battle, Judas and his men, with great fierceness, began the onset, and did wonders: For Eleazar, (b) a brother of Judas, observing one particular elephant which was higher than the rest, * armed with royal harness, and supposing thereby that the king was upon it (at once both to deliver his country and gain himself immortal honour), he made at it with all his might; and having slain every one that stood in his way, got under its belly, and thrust his spear into it, so that the creature fell down dead, but unhappily crushed him to death by its weight in the fall.

At length, after having slain about six hundred of the king's forces, perceiving that they must be overpowered by so great a number, (c) they withdrew from the fight, and made a safe retreat to Jerusalem. Antiochus followed after with one part of his army, but left the other to carry on the siege of Bethzura, which the inhabitants, seeing no prospect of relief from their friends, were forced to surrender. From Bethzura the king's forces (d) marched to Jerusalem, where Judas had shut himself up and his friends in the temple. They defended the place with great resolution; but must inevitably have been compelled to surrender, had they not been relieved by this lucky and unexpected accident.

In this absence of the king and the regent Lysias, that Philip, whom, as we said before, Antiochus Epiphanes at his death constituted guardian of his son, had made himself master of Antioch, and taken upon him the government of the Syrian empire. (e) Upon the receipt of this news, Lysias found it necessary to make peace with the Jews, that he might be at liberty to return and expel the intruder. Accordingly, a peace was granted them upon honourable and advantageous terms, and ratified by oath; but when Antiochus came to see the strength of the fortifications belonging to the temple, he caused them, contrary to the articles he had sworn, to be all pulled down and demolished, and then returned towards Syria, where he found that Philip had seized on the imperial city; but by one easy battle, wherein Philip was worsted and slain, he soon recovered the possession of it.

(f) In this expedition against Judea, Menelaus the high priest accompanied Antiochus, and was as busy in offering him his service against his own people as any: But falling, by some means, under the displeasure of Lysias, he was accused and condemned as the author and fomentor of this Jewish war; and accordingly was carried to Berhæa, † a town in Syria, and there cast headlong into a tower of ashes: but after his death

(a) 1 Maccab. vi. 32. 2 Maccab. xiii. 13.

(b) 2 Maccab. xiii. 15, &c.

* Though elephants have an hide impenetrable almost in every part except their belly, yet, for their greater safety, those that are appointed for the wars are usually armed and covered all over, as it were, with a coat of mail. The kings of India (according to Q. Curtius, lib. ii.), when they took the field, were drawn by elephants all covered over with gold; and Florus has described the elephants made use of in battles, "auro, argento, purpura, et suo ebore fulgentes," lib. ii. c. 8. harnessed and set out, much after the fashion of the war-horse in Virgil:

Spumantemque agitatat equum, quem pellis ahenis

In plumam squamis auro concerta tegebat.

Æn. xi.

(c) 1 Maccab. vi. 47.

(d) Ibid. ver. 48, &c.

(e) Ibid. ver. 55, 56. 2 Maccab. xiii. 23.

(f) Ibid. ver. 3—8.

† This was one of the punishments of the Persians, whereby great criminals among them were put to death. The manner of it is described in the xiiith chapter of the second book of the Maccabees, to be thus:—An high tower was filled a great way up with ashes; the criminal being from the top thrown down headlong into them, there had the ashes by a wheel continually stirred up and raised about him, till he was suffocated and died. "Such was the death of

A. M. 3841.
&c. or 5247,
Ant. Chris.
163, &c.
or 164.

(a) Antiochus conferred the office of high priest upon one Alcimus, a man altogether as wicked as the other.

All this while Antiochus Eupater held the crown of Syria by an unjust title: For Demetrius, the son of Seleucus Philopater, elder brother to Antiochus Epiphanes, was the legal heir thereof. He, in exchange for his uncle Antiochus, had been sent an hostage to Rome the very year that his father died; and Antiochus, returning at the very nick of time, was unanimously declared king in the absence and minority of the rightful heir. But Demetrius, being now in the twenty-third year of his age when his uncle died, and his son Eupater was appointed king in his room, * thought it high time to put in his claim; and accordingly moved the senate of Rome for their assistance in the recovery of his father's kingdom; and as an inducement thereunto, he alleged, that having been bred up in that city from his childhood, "he should always look on Rome as his country, the senators as his fathers, and their sons as his brothers." But the senate, having more regard to their own interest than the right of Demetrius, and judging it more to their advantage to have a boy reign in Syria, as Eupater then was, than a man of mature understanding, as they knew Demetrius to be, instead of asserting his right, to whom it belonged, they confirmed Eupater in the kingdom.

Demetrius being excluded from all hopes of any favour or assistance from the senate, had nothing left to do but to endeavour to make his escape from Rome, and to risk his fortune in his own country. This he did; (b) and landing at Tripolis in Syria, made it believed that he was sent by the Roman senate (which would support his pretensions) to take possession of the kingdom. Hereupon Eupater's cause, being in the general opinion given up for lost, every one deserted from him to Demetrius; nay, the very soldiers seized on him, and the regent Lysias, with an intent to deliver them up to this new comer, as soon as he arrived at Antioch; but he refusing to see them, ordered them both to be put to death; and so, without any farther opposition, became thoroughly settled in the whole kingdom.

He had not been long so settled before Alcimus (who, on the death of Menelaus, had by Antiochus Eupater been constituted high priest of the Jews, but was never acknowledged as such, because in the time of persecution he had apostatized) came and implored his protection against Judas Maccabæus and his party; accusing them of being enemies to the kings of Syria, fomenters of sedition, and murderers and persecutors of his most faithful subjects. By this representation Demetrius was so exasperated, that (c) he immediately ordered Bacchides, the governor of Mesopotamia, to march with an army into Judea; and having confirmed Alcimus in the office of high priest, joined him in the same commission for carrying on the war in Judea.

that wicked man, (says the author of the book above cited), that he had not a burial in the earth, and that very justly." But then the reason which he gives for this providential judgment upon him is very light and trifling. "Forasmuch as he had committed many sins about the altar, whose fire and ashes were holy, he received his death in ashes," ver. 7, 8. *Prideaux's Connection*, Anno 424.

(a) 2 Maccab. xiv. 3. *Jewish Antiq.* lib. xii. c. 15.

* What excited him the rather to do it at this time was the murder of Cn. Octavius: For the Roman senate, having sent three ambassadors into Syria, whereof Octavius was chief, to administer the affairs of the nation during the minority of the king, these ambassadors, finding that there were more ships in the navy, and more elephants in the army, than the treaty made with Antiochus the Great, after the battle of Mount Siphilus, allowed of, caused the ships to be burnt, and the elephants to be slain that exceed-

ed the number stipulated. This occasioned great murmurings and discontent among the people, and provoked one Leptines to such a degree of indignation, that he fell upon Octavius, as he was anointing himself in the Gymnasium at Laodicea, and there slew him. Eupater and Lysias did all they could to clear themselves from having any hand in this vile act, and to this purpose sent ambassadors to Rome to inform the senate of their innocence; but the senate, after having heard what the ambassadors had to say, gave them no answer, expressing their resentment by their angry silence; And therefore Demetrius thought this no improper time to move the senate, when he perceived them thus out of humour with Eupater, the usurper of his kingdom. *Prideaux's Connection*, Anno 162.

(b) 1 Maccab. vii. 1, &c. 2 Maccab. xiv. 1, 2. *Joseph. Antiq.* lib. xii. c. 16. *Justin*, lib. xxxiv. c. 3.

(c) 1 Maccab. vii. 8—20.

No sooner were they arrived in Judea with a considerable body of troops, but the scribes † and doctors of the law met together, and consulted what they were to do upon this occasion. Very desirous they were to have an high priest again settled among them, and not at all suspicious that any of the sons of Aaron would do them any wrong; and therefore, upon promise of safe conduct, they waited upon them in order to bring matters to a peaceable accommodation: But the perfidious Alcimus, having got them in his power, caused sixty of them to be seized, and all put to death on one day, which made the people more cautious of him for the future.

From 1 Macc.
v. 1. 2 Macc.
x. 11. and
Jos lib. xii.
c. 14. to the
end of 1 and
2 Macc. and
to Jos. lib.
xiii. c. 19.

Bacchides, however, returning to Antioch, put Alcimus in possession of the country, and left him some forces to support him in it. With these the wicked high priest did much mischief, and committed many murders upon those that were not for him: But as soon as Judas (a) with his men appeared in the field again, he left the country for fear, and returned to the king with fresh accusations against him and his brothers, who, as long as they were permitted to live, (as he told him) would never suffer the king's authority to take place, nor any lasting peace to be established in the country. So that upon this representation, Demetrius (b) sent another army against the Jews, under the command of Nicanor, with strict orders to destroy Judas, disperse his followers, and thoroughly establish Alcimus in the high priest's office.

Nicanor was not insensible of the courage and conduct of Judas; and therefore loth to come to an engagement with him, he endeavoured to compose matters by a treaty, and accordingly entered into articles of peace with him: But the high priest (c) not liking the peace, because his interest (as he imagined) was not sufficiently secured in it, went the third time to the king, and so possessed him against it, that he refused to ratify what was agreed, and sent his positive commands to Nicanor to go on with the war, and not to cease prosecuting it, until he had either slain Judas or taken him prisoner, and sent him bound to Antioch. Upon these instructions, Nicanor being obliged, though much against his will, to alter his conduct, marched his army up to Jerusalem, and designing, by craft and treachery, to get Judas into his power, (d) invited him to a conference, which the other, upon presumption of the depending peace, readily complied with, and came to the place appointed: But when he found that an ambush was laid for his apprehension, he fled from his presence, and so began the war afresh. This war was carried on with various successes for some time, and with some particular cruelties on Nicanor's side †², but at length coming to a decisive battle near a village called Bethoron, Nicanor was slain in the first onset; which the rest of the army perceiving, cast away their arms and fled: so that, what with Judas's pursuing them, and the country rising upon them as they endeavoured to escape, not one of the whole army (which consisted of five and thirty thousand men) was left to carry home the tidings of their overthrow.

After the pursuit was ended, the victorious army, returning to the field of battle,

† These, in all probability, were a deputation from the great Sanhedrim, which at this time had the government of the nation in their hands; and why Judas, who was at the head of them, did not think proper to accompany them, the reason is pretty obvious. *Calmet's Commentary* on 1 Maccab. vii. 12.

(a) 1 Maccab. vii. 23, 24.

(b) *Ibid.* ver. 26—29. 2 Maccab. xiv. 12—25.

(c) *Ibid.* ver. 26—29.

(d) Chap. vii. 27—31.

†² One instance of this kind was practised upon Razis, an eminent and honourable senator of the Jewish Sanhedrim, who had not only persevered in his religion through the worst of times, but, upon all occa-

sions, been very munificent to the people. Him Nicanor was resolved to cut off, the rather because he thought it would be an act of high displeasure to the Jews; and therefore sent a party to seize him. Razis was, at this time, at a castle of his, which he had in the country, where he defended himself against them for some time with great valour, but at length, finding that he could hold out no longer, he fell upon his sword. The wound however was not mortal; and therefore he threw himself headlong over the battlements of the tower whereon he fought; but finding himself still alive, he thrust his hand into his wound, and pulling out his bowels, cast them upon the assailants, and so died. 2 Maccab. xiv. 46.

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took the spoils of the slain; and having found Nicanor's body among the dead, they cut off his head, and this right hand which he stretched out so proudly in his threatenings against the temple, and hanged them up upon one of the towers of Jerusalem. A general joy overspread the whole city upon this occasion; and in commemoration of so great a deliverance, it was ordained, that the thirteenth day of their month Adar, (which answers in part to our February) the day whereon this victory was obtained, should be ever after observed as an anniversary day of solemn thanksgiving; and so it is kept even to this present time under the name of the day of Nicanor.

(a) Judas having now some respite after this victory, was thinking of making a league with the Romans. He had heard much talk of their power, prowess, and policy; and was therefore desirous of making an alliance † with them, in hopes of receiving thereby some protection and relief against the oppressions of the Syrians. To this purpose he sent Jason and Eupolemus, men of sufficiency for such an embassy, to Rome, who were kindly received by the senate, and from them obtained a decree, acknowledging the Jews for friends and allies to the Romans, a league of mutual defence between them, and a letter to Demetrius, requiring him, upon the peril of having war denounced against him, to desist from giving the Jews any farther molestation: But before the return of these ambassadors Judas was dead.

(b) For Demetrius, having received an account of the defeat and death of Nicanor, sent Bacchides (with Alcimus) the second time into Judea, at the head of a very numerous army, made up of the prime forces and flower of his militia. Judas, at their coming, had no more than three thousand men to oppose them; and these were so terrified with the strength and number of the enemy, that they deserted their general all to eight hundred men. However, with these few he resolved to try his fortune; and when his soldiers advised him to retreat, and wait for a supply, "God forbid, says he, that the sun should ever see me turn my back to my enemies. If Providence has ordained that we should die, let us die manfully, fighting for our brethren; and let us never stain the honour of our former valorous deeds by an ignominious flight." And so animating them by his own example, he charged and broke the right wing, where Bacchides commanded in person, and pursued them as far as the mountains of Azotus; but having not forces enough to keep the left wing in play, he was followed and encompassed. The action was very hot and obstinate: The Jews sold their lives at a dear rate: Their general did every valiant thing that man could do; till, being overpowered by numbers, he was slain, and his men, thus deprived of their heroic leader, were forced to fly.

Thus fell the great Judas Maccabæus, the restorer and preserver of the true worship of God, and the reliever and protector of his distressed countrymen while he lived. His two brothers, Simon and Jonathan, took up his dead body, and conveying it to the city of Modin, they there buried it, in the sepulchre of his ancestors, with all the funeral honour that was due to the memory of so brave a man, and so excellent a commander.

After the death of Judas, Bacchides made himself master of the country, and used all the friends and adherents to the Maccabees, wherever he found them, with the utmost barbarity; (c) so that Jonathan was in a manner necessitated to take upon him the command in the room of his brother Judas, and to become the captain of all those who had preserved their integrity. To this purpose, taking with him his brother Simon, and those that had resorted to him, he retired into the wilderness of Tekoa, and there encamped, with a morass on one side and the river Jordan on the other, so that

(a) 2 Maccab. viii. *Jewish Antiq.* lib. xii. c. 17.

† Josephus takes notice, that this was the very first treaty that ever the Jews made with the Romans, which is very probable from the manner in which the author of the first book of Maccabees prefaces his account of it; for there it appears, that the Jews, till

this time, had very little knowledge of the Roman state. *Joseph.* *Antiq.* lib. xii. c. 17. and 1 Maccab. viii. 1.

(b) 1 Maccab. ix. 1, &c.

(c) 1 Maccab. ix. 28—33.

they could not easily become at. But Bacchides (a) marching after them, and having made himself master of the pass that led to their encampment, assaulted them in it on the Sabbath-day, expecting to meet with no resistance. Jonathan, however, reminding his men of the determination that was made in this case in the time of his father Mattathias, encouraged them to dispute it bravely; which accordingly they did, even till they had slain about a thousand of the assailants: But then, finding that they should be overpowered with numbers, they cast themselves into the river, and, by swimming over to the other side, made their escape.

From 1 Macc.
v. 1. 2 Macc.
v. 11. and
Jos. lib. xii.
c. 14. to the
end of 1 and
2 Macc. and
of Jos. lib.
xiii. c. 19

Bacchides thought it not proper to pursue them any farther, but rather to go back to Jerusalem; where, having fortified Mount Acra and the neighbouring towns, and put garrisons in them, he took hostages for the fidelity of the inhabitants, and so returned to Syria †: But, before he departed, Alcimus, the great troubler of Israel, and whom he had not long before settled in the high priesthood, was smitten with a palsy, whereof he suddenly died; so that the land had rest for two years, and Jonathan an opportunity of bringing his affairs to some better settlement in Judea.

(b) The adverse party, however, was not long easy; but, at the end of two years, prevailed with Bacchides to return with his army into Judea, proposing to seize Jonathan, and all his abettors, as soon as he was arrived with his forces to support the enterprise: But when Jonathan had intelligence of this, he laid hold on fifty of the principal conspirators, and put them to death, which quelled all the rest. Being sensible, however, that he could not stand against so great a force as Bacchides had brought against him, he retired to Bethbasi, a place strongly situate in the wilderness, and here he purposed to make a stand against the enemy.

Bacchides, as soon as he arrived in Judea, went after Jonathan; but upon his approach, Jonathan left Simon his brother with one part of the forces to defend the place, whilst himself with the other part took the field to harass the enemy abroad: in which capacities they both acted so well, Jonathan, by cutting off several of their parties, and now and then falling upon the outskirts of their army employed in the siege; and Simon, by making frequent sallies upon them, and burning the engines they had brought against the place; that Bacchides, (c) growing weary of this undertaking, and not a little enraged at those who were the occasion of his return and disgrace, put several of them to death. This opportunity Jonathan laid hold on, and therefore sent messengers to him, to desire an accommodation, which Bacchides readily came into, so that a peace was concluded. The prisoners whom he had in his custody were all restored, and himself took an oath never to molest the Jews any more: which accordingly he fulfilled; for, as soon as the peace was ratified on both sides, he went away, and never more returned into the country.

When the wars were thus happily ended, Jonathan retired to Michmash, a town about nine miles distant to the north of Jerusalem, where he governed the people according to law; cut off all those that had apostatized from him, and as far as in him lay reformed all abuses both in church and state; repairing the city of Jerusalem; fortifying it on every side; and causing the wall round the mount of the temple, which had been pulled down, to be re-built.

At this time Alexander (for that was the name which he assumed) pretending to be the son of Antiochus Epiphanes †², laid claim to the Syrian monarchy; and being well supported-

(a) 1 Maccab. ix. 43—53.

† It is most likely, that Demetrius had by this time received the letters which were sent to him by the Romans in behalf of the Jews, and thereupon gave Bacchides orders to surcease his vexations of that people; and that, in obedience to these orders, Bacchides took occasion, on the death of Alcimus, to

leave the country. *Prideaux's Connection*, Anno 160.

(b) 1 Macc. ver. 58—61.

(c) Ibid. ix. 69—73. *Joseph. Antiq. lib. xii. c. 1.* and 2.

†² In the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes, one Heraclides was his treasurer in the province of Babylon, while his brother Timarchus, another favourite of the

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ed by foreign powers, seized Ptolemais, a city of Palestine, and was making preparations to drive Demetrius out of the throne. On this occasion the two rival princes did both make their court to Jonathan, as thinking him a good ally: Demetrius (a) sent him letters constituting him his general in Judea, with full authority to raise forces, and to provide them with arms to come to his assistance, and commanding, at the same time, that hostages which were in the fortress of Jerusalem should be delivered to him; which accordingly was done. (b) Alexander, on the other hand, † having sent him a purple robe, and a crown of gold, as ensigns of great dignity, made him a grant of the high priesthood, and of the honour to be called the king's friend. Demetrius hearing of this, (c) and being resolved to outbid Alexander, made him still more advantageous offers: but the Jews, remembering what a bitter enemy he had been to all those that had adhered to the true interest of their country, and suspecting that these offers proceeded only from the necessity of his affairs, which would certainly be revoked as soon as the storm was blown over, resolved rather to enter into league with Alexander: and therefore Jonathan †², accepting of his grant of the high priest's office, did, on the feast of tabernacles, which soon ensued, put on the pontifical robe, and officiated as high priest, after that the place from the death of Alcimus had been vacant seven years.

In the mean time, the two contending kings having drawn together all their forces, committed the determination of their cause to a decisive battle, in which Demetrius †³

king's, was governor of it; but on the coming of Demetrius to the crown, they were both found guilty of great misdemeanors, for which Timarchus was put to death, but Heraclides made his escape out of the kingdom, and took up his residence at Rhodes. While he was there, Demetrius having given himself up entirely to luxury and sloth, so neglected the affairs of government, that his subjects justly took a disgust against him, and were ready to enter into any conspiracy to depose him; which Heraclides understanding, in hopes of making a revolution in favour of himself, he contrived this plot.—In the isle of Rhodes there was a youth of a very mean and obscure condition, called Balas, but in other respects every way fit for his purpose. Him he prevailed with to pass for the son of Antiochus Epiphanes; and having thoroughly instructed him how to act his part, he carried him to Rome, where, by his craft and earnest solicitations, he not only prevailed with the senate to own him, but procured a decree from them likewise, permitting him to recover the kingdom of Syria out of the hands of Demetrius, and promising their assistance in doing it. By virtue of this decree he raised forces, and with them sailing to Ptolemais in Palestine, seized that city; and there, by the name of Alexander, son of Antiochus Epiphanes, took upon him to be king of Syria. Great numbers, out of disaffection to Demetrius, flocked to him; so that, at length, Demetrius being defeated and slain, Alexander obtained the full possession of the Syrian empire. *Prideaux's Connection*, Anno 152.

(a) 1 Maccab. x. 25, &c. *Joseph. Antiq. lib. xiii. c. 4.* (b) 1 Maccab. x. 15—20. *Joseph. Antiq. lib. xxiii. c. 5.*

† The letter which he sent him, together with these, is to this effect: "king Alexander to his brother Jonathan, &c. Being informed of your power and valour, and that you are worthy of friendship, we constitute you high priest of your nation; and it is

our pleasure that you should be enrolled in the number of the king's friends. To this end we have sent you a purple robe, and a golden crown, not doubting of a suitable return from you for our affection and friendship." *Joseph. Antiq. lib. xiii. c. 5.*

(c) 1 Maccab. x. 25, &c. *Joseph. Antiq. lib. xiii. c. 5.* †² From the time of the return from the Babylonish captivity, the office of high priest had been in the family of Jozadack, and, in a lineal descent, was transmitted down to Onias, the third of that name. He was supplanted by Jason his brother, as Jason was by his brother Menelaus, and after the death of Menelaus, Alcimus, who was of a different family, was put into the office by the command of the king of Syria. Whether the Asmonæans were of the race of Jozadack or not, it is nowhere said; but it is certain that they were of the course of Joarib, (1 Maccab. ii. 1.) which was the first class of the sons of Aaron; and therefore, upon the failure of the former pontifical family, they had the best right to succeed. With this right it was that Jonathan took the office; and in his family it became settled, and continued for several descents, until the time of Herod, who, from an office of inheritance, changed it into that of arbitrary will and pleasure. Whoever had the power after him, put the high priests in or out as they thought fit, till at length the office was extinguished by the destruction of the temple by the Romans. *Prideaux's Connection*, Anno 253.

†³ In the first onset, Demetrius's left wing put the opposite wing of the enemy to flight; but as he pursued them too far, (a fault in war which has lost many victories) by the time that they came back, the right wing, in which Demetrius fought in person, was overborne, and he slain in the rout; for his horse having plunged him into a bog, they, who pursued him, shot at him there with their arrows till he died. *Joseph. Antiq. lib. xiii. c. 5.* *Justin. lib. xxxv. c. 1.* *Apion, de Syriacis and Polybius, lib. iii.*

being defeated and slain, and Alexander by this victory made master of the whole Syrian empire, (a) he sent to Ptolemy, king of Egypt, demanding his daughter Cleopatra in marriage. To this marriage (which was performed at Ptolemais) Jonathan the high priest was invited, and was received by both the kings (for Ptolemy was likewise at the nuptials) with great favour, especially by Ptolemy, who, to do him a particular honour, caused him to be clothed in purple, and to take place near himself, among the first princes of his kingdom; and besides making him general of all his forces in Judea, gave him an office † of great credit and renown in his palace.

But Alexander himself did not long enjoy this prosperous state. Demetrius, (b) the son of the late Demetrius, resolving to revenge his father's death, and recover his kingdom, came from Crete (where he and his brother Antiochus had been concealed in the late troubles), and, with an army of mercenaries, landed in Cilicia. It was not long before he gained over to his interest Apollonius, ‡ the governor of Cœlo-Syria, who, to oblige Jonathan to quit Alexander's party, and join with Demetrius, (c) marched an army as far as Jamnia, and from thence sent a challenge to Jonathan to leave his fastnesses on the mountains, and come and fight him on the plains.

Provoked at this message, Jonathan marched out with ten thousand men. He first took Joppa, in the sight of Apollonius and his army, and then joining battle, not only vanquished him in the open field, but pursued his broken forces to Azotus. Here was a famous temple of the god Dagon, unto which the Syrians fled for shelter; but Jonathan, entering the town, burnt it to the ground, and set the temple on fire; so that the number of those who were slain in battle, and perished by the flames, amounted to no less than eight thousand men. After this, having treated the neighbouring towns that belonged to the enemy in the like manner, he led his victorious army back to Jerusalem loaded with spoils; whither he had not been long come, before Alexander, hearing of his renowned actions in favour of his cause, (d) sent him a * buckle of gold, such as

From 1 Macc.
v. 1. 2 Macc.
x. 11. and
Jos. lib. xii.
c. 14. to the
end of 1 and
2 Macc. and
to Jos. lib.
xiii. c. 19.

(a) 1 Maccab. x. 54. *Joseph. Antiq. lib. xiii. c. 7.*

† The word Meridarches, which we translate a duke, Grotius (in his commentary on 1 Maccab. x. 65.) makes to be the chief sewer, which even in the German empire is an office that one of the electors bears: but, (in his Commentary on Matth. xix. 28.) he makes it denote the governor of a province; and if in this place it were so taken, it would better become Jonathan (one would think) to be made governor of some part of the Syrian empire, than to be the regulator of the dishes at the royal table. *Prideaux's Connection, Anno 150.*

(b) 1 Maccab. x. 67. *Joseph. Antiq. lib. xiii. c. 8. Justin, lib. xxxv. c. 2.*

‡ Apollonius was a common name among the Syro-Macedonians and Greeks; and in the history of the Maccabees, we find so many mentioned of that name, that, for the prevention of mistakes, it may not be improper to give some account of the several persons who bore it. The first that we meet with of that name is Apollonius, the son of Thræseas, 2 Maccab. iii. 5. who was governor of Cœlo-Syria and Phœnicia under Seleucus Philopater, when Heliodorus came to Jerusalem to rob the temple. He was chief minister of state to Seleucus; but on the accession of his brother Antiochus Epiphanes to the crown, he left Syria and retired to Miletus. He had a son of his own name that was bred up at Rome, and resided with Demetrius, the son of Seleucus Philopater, who was then an hostage in that place. When Demetrius

recovered the crown of Syria, this Apollonius became his prime favourite, and was made governor of Cœlo-Syria and Phœnicia, the same government which his father held under Seleucus Philopater; and this I take to be the same Apollonius, who, being continued in the same government by Alexander, now revolted from him, to embrace the interest of Demetrius, the son of his old master, and to engage Jonathan to do the like, marched his forces against him. Another Apollonius is spoken of, 2 Maccab. iv. 21. as the chief minister of Antiochus Epiphanes, who from him was sent as ambassador, first to Rome, and afterwards to Ptolemy Philometer, king of Egypt; and him I take to be the same that, with a detachment of two and twenty thousand men, was sent to destroy Jerusalem, and build a fortress on Mount Acra. There are, besides these, two other persons in the history of the Maccabees mentioned under the name of Apollonius. The former of these being governor of Samaria in the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, 1 Maccab. iii. 10. was slain in battle by Judas Maccabæus; and the latter, who is called the son of Genneus, 2 Maccab. xii. 2. being governor of some Toparchy in Palestine, under Antiochus Eupater, did then signalize himself by being a great enemy of the Jews. *Prideaux's Connection, Anno 148.*

(c) 1 Maccab. x. 9—77. *Joseph. Antiq. lib. xiii. c. 8.* (d) 1 Maccab. x. 88, 89.

* The golden buckle which was worn upon the shoulder was a very singular mark of distinction both

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none but the royal family were allowed to wear, and at the same time made him a present of the city of Ecron, and all the territories thereunto belonging.

(a) When Apollonius, governor of Cœlo-Syria, had declared for Demetrius, Alexander called in his father-in-law, Ptolemy Philometer, to his assistance. He marched into Palestine with a great army; and as he passed, in all the cities (which by Alexander's orders opened their gates to him) he left a good number of his own soldiers to strengthen the garrisons. But whether or no this might give some umbrage to Alexander, so it was, that Ptolemy discovered a design which Ammonius, Alexander's great favourite, had formed to have him cut off at his coming to Ptolemais; and upon his demanding justice to be done to the traitor, by Alexander's refusing to give him up, he plainly perceived, that the king was a party to the treason, and thence began to harbour an implacable hatred against him.

He therefore marched his army to Antioch; and having taken his daughter from Alexander, gave her to his rival Demetrius, and (with her) assurance, to restore him to his father's throne. (b) The Antiochians, taking the opportunity of Ptolemy's approach to execute their resentments upon Ammonius, rose in a tumult, and slew him; and then, opening their gates to Ptolemy, were all disposed to make him their king; but he, modestly declining that offer, recommended to them the restoration of Demetrius, the true heir; whereupon Demetrius was received into the city, and placed on the throne of his ancestors.

Alexander, who was then in Cilicia, hearing of this, came with all his forces towards Antioch, wasting the country with fire and sword; but when Ptolemy, with his new son-in law, met him, and gave him battle, his army was routed, and himself was forced to fly to Arabia, where Zabdiel, king of the country, cut off his head, and sent it as a present to Ptolemy, who was not a little pleased with the sight of it. His joys however did not last long; for in five days time he died of the wounds he had received in battle, leaving Demetrius in quiet possession of his father's kingdom, which he, having recovered by virtue of this victory, did thenceforward take upon him the name of *Nicator*, i. e. *conqueror*.

During these transactions Jonathan (c) laid siege to the fortress at Jerusalem; but some of the garrison escaping by night, came and acquainted Demetrius with it, who thereupon marched from Antioch with an army to relieve it. But coming to Ptolemais, he stopped there, and sent for Jonathan to appear before him, and answer to such accusations as were preferred against him. Jonathan went thither, though he ordered the siege still to go on; and when he came to Demetrius, by his rich presents and wise management, he so mollified the king, and insinuated himself into his good graces, that he not only confirmed him in the possession of what he had, but honoured him likewise with many new favours, and upon the payment of three hundred talents, agreed to exempt from all tolls, taxes, and tributes, all the places that were under his government.

Jonathan, upon his return to Jerusalem, pressed the siege of the fortress very closely; but finding little or no success therein, he sent an embassy (d) to Demetrius, desiring him to withdraw the garrison which he could not expel. This, and much more Demetrius promised to do for him, if he would but send him some forces to reduce the inhabitants of Antioch, who, incensed by his cruelty and oppression, had taken up arms against him. Jonathan immediately dispatched three thousand choice men to his aid, who coming to Antioch when the people had beset the palace with an intent to mur-

among the Greeks and Persians (from whom the Macedonians took it), and was generally made the reward of great and gallant actions in war. *Calmet's Commentary on 1 Maccab. x. 89.*

(a) 1 Maccab. xi. 1—5. *Joseph. Antiq. lib. xiii.*

c. 8.

(b) *Ibid. xi. 13. Joseph. ibid.*

(c) 1 Maccab. xi. 20. 47. *Joseph. Antiq. lib. xvii. c. 8.*

(d) 1 Maccab. xi. 47—52. *Joseph. Antiquities, lib. xiii. c. 9.*

der the tyrant (as they called him), fell on with fire and sword, and having burnt a great part of the city, and slain of the inhabitants about an hundred thousand persons, obliged the rest to have recourse to the king's clemency, and pray for peace. But all this service availed nothing. Demetrius, (*a*) seeing this storm overpast, forgot the bargain which he had made with Jonathan at Ptolemais; and (though he had received the three hundred talents in lieu of them) threatened him with military execution, unless he sent the taxes and tribute which were usually paid by his predecessors: And would certainly have done all that he had threatened, had not Tryphon found out another employ for his arms.

From 1 Macc.
v. 1. 2 Macc.
x. 11. and
Jos. lib. xii.
c. 14. to the
end of 1 and
2 Macc. and
of Jos. lib.
xiii. c. 19.

This Tryphon had formerly served Alexander as governor of Antioch, but in the present king's reign was laid aside. Observing, however, that the cruelty and tyranny which was everywhere practised, the disbanding the Syrian soldiers, and retaining only foreigners in pay, together with many more grievances which the people laboured under, had quite alienated their hearts, and made them ready for a general defection, he thought this no unfit opportunity to put in practice his long concerted scheme of advancing himself to the crown of Syria.

To this purpose he goes into Arabia (*b*); gets Antiochus, son of the late Alexander, into his hands; brings him into Syria; claims the kingdom for him; and to support this claim, all the soldiers whom Demetrius had disbanded, and several others whom his ill conduct had made his enemies, flock in great numbers to the pretender. With these Tryphon marches against Demetrius; vanquishes him in battle; forces him into Seleucia; and, having taken possession of Antioch, places Antiochus upon the throne, and gives him the name of Theos, or the Divine.

The ill return which Demetrius made Jonathan was doubtless the chief reason for his declaring for this new king; (*c*) who, by the advice of those that were about him, took care, not only to confirm him in the office of high priest, and in all his other places and dignities, but to make likewise his brother Simon commander of all his forces from Tyre to the frontiers of Egypt. Upon this defection from him, Demetrius sent all the troops that were left in Cœlo-Syria and Phœnicia to chastise him for it: But he not only repulsed them twice, but took Gaza likewise, and all the country as far as Damascus; while Simon (*d*), whom he left in Judea, penetrating into the land of the Philistines, took Joppa, and placed a strong garrison in it. Tryphon, who had no other aim in getting young Antiochus into his hands than to serve his wicked purposes, knew very well, that as long as Jonathan continued in his interest, it would be in vain for him to attempt the crown; and (*e*) therefore, having prevailed with him to dismiss his army, and to accompany him to Ptolemais (under pretence of putting that place into his hands) with no more than a thousand men, they were no sooner entered, but the garrison, having shut the gates upon them, seized Jonathan, and put his men to the sword.

Having thus circumvented Jonathan, he took him along with him, and marched his army into Judea: but the Jews by this time had chosen Simon his brother for their commander, and were ready to give him a warm reception. Not finding himself, therefore, able to engage them, he sent Simon this deceitful message:—(*f*) "That he had seized Jonathan only because he owed an hundred talents to the king; but that, in case he would send the money, and Jonathan's two sons, to be hostages for their father's fidelity, he would set him again at liberty." Simon soon saw through this deceit; but he complied with the traitor's demand, for fear it should be said that he had not done all that lay in his power to save his brother's life; and accordingly sent the money and two young men. But when the villian had got them in his power, he put both them

(*a*) 1 Maccab. xi. 53.

(*b*) Ibid. xi. 54—56. *Joseph. Antiq. lib. xiii. c. 9. and Apion, de Syriacis.*

(*c*) Ibid. xi. 57—59. *Joseph. ibid.*

(*d*) Ibid. xi. 64. *Joseph. ibid.*

(*e*) Ibid. xii. 39—52.

(*f*) Ibid. xiii. 12—19. *Joseph. Antiq. lib. xiii. c. 11.*

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and their father to death; and, thinking that he had now nothing to obstruct his main design, he caused Antiochus to be murdered privately; and then, assuming the crown, declared himself king of Syria in his stead.

When Simon heard of his brother's death, and that he was buried at Bascama in the land of Gilead, (a) he sent and fetched his dead body from thence; and having buried it with great solemnity in his father's sepulchre at Modin, he erected over it a stately monument †, all built of white marble, and curiously wrought and polished.

(b) Simon, as soon as he was admitted to the government of the land, sent to Demetrius, who was then at Laodicea, a crown of gold, and ambassadors to treat with him about terms of peace and alliance. The king granted to Simon a confirmation of the high-priesthood and principality, and to the people a release of all taxes, tolls, and tributes, with an oblivion of all past acts of hostility, on condition that they would join with him against the usurper. In virtue of which treaty, Simon being made sovereign prince of the land, and the land freed from all foreign yoke, the Jews, from this time, instead of dating their instruments and contracts by the years of the Syrian kings, (as hitherto they had done) dated them by the years of Simon and his successors.

Having thus obtained the independent sovereignty of the land, (c) he took a progress through it to inspect what was wanting for its security; repairing the fortifications that were decayed; making new ones where they were wanted; and besieging and taking the places that stood out against him. He had no occasion however to besiege the fortress of Jerusalem, because the wall which his brother Jonathan had built against it had so cut off all communication with the city, that the garrison being sore distressed for want of provisions, and all other necessities, was forced to surrender the place; and Simon, wisely considering how much the city of Jerusalem had been infested by that citadel, pulled it down to the ground, that it might no longer be a retreat to sedition and faction; and (to prevent its being built at any time) levelled the hill on which it was situated; so that now no eminence was left but the mount of the temple only.

Demetrius* at this time was prisoner in Parthia, and Cleopatra his queen had shut up herself and her children in Seleucia ‡; but fearing to fall into the hands of the trai-

(a) 1 Maccab. xiii. 25—30. *Joseph. Antiquities*, lib. xiii. c. 11.

† This edifice being erected on an eminence, was seen far off at sea; and on that coast was taken notice of as a good sea-mark. Near to the monument Simon placed seven pyramids, two for his father and mother, four for his four brothers, and the seventh for himself, and then encompassed the whole with a stately portico, supported by marble pillars, each of one entire piece, and whereon were engraved ships and arms, and other military ensigns. Josephus tells us, that this whole fabric was standing entire in his days, and looked upon as a very curious and excellent piece of architecture, *Antiq. lib. xiii. c. 11.* and Eusebius mentions it as still in being in his time, which was two hundred years after the time of Josephus. *Prideaux's Connection*, Anno 144.

(b) 1 Maccab. xiii. 34—42. *Jewish Antiquities*, lib. xiii. c. 11.

(c) *Ibid.* xiv. 7—33.

* The reason of Demetrius's being in this condition in this place, by profane historians, is said to be this:—As the Parthians had, at this time, overrun in a manner all the East, and made themselves masters of every country, from the river Indus to the Euphrates, those who were of the Macedonian race in those parts, not bearing their usurpation and insolence, invited Demetrius by repeated embassies to

come to their relief, promising him a general revolt from the Parthians, and such assistance of forces against them, as would enable him to suppress these usurpers, and recover to his dominions all the provinces of the East. Upon confidence in these promises he undertook the expedition; and found, as soon as he appeared, that the Elymæans, the Persians, and the Bactrians, declared for him. By the assistance of these nations he overthrew the Parthians in several conflicts; but at last, under the shew of a treaty of peace, being drawn into a snare, he was made prisoner, and all his army cut to pieces. The king that reigned in Parthia at this time was Mithridates, the son of Priapatites, who, having thus gotten Demetrius into his power, carried him round the revolted provinces, that by seeing the prince whom they confided in reduced to this ignominious condition, they might more easily be brought to submit to their former yoke: But when he had done this, he allowed him a maintenance suitable to the state of a king, and gave him one of his daughters, whose name was Rhodaguna, in marriage. *Justin*, lib. xli. c. 5, and 6. *Joseph. Antiq. lib. xiii. c. 9, and 12.* and *Orosius*, lib. v. c. 4.

‡ It is a city of Syria, situate upon the Mediterranean, near the place where the Orontes discharges itself into that sea.

tor Tryphon, and being provoked at her husband's marrying the daughter of Mithridates, king of Parthia, (a) she sent to his brother Antiochus, who still continued in Crete, offering him the crown, and herself in marriage, if he would come and join his interest with her's against Tryphon. This offer he readily accepted of; and in the beginning of the next year landed in Syria with an army of mercenaries, which was soon augmented by a large accession of the usurper's forces which every day deserted from him: So that, not being able to keep the field, he fled from place to place, till at length coming to Apamea †, his own native city, he was there taken and put to death. This end being put to his usurpation, Antiochus became fully possessed of his father's throne; and being a man much addicted to hunting, he had, for that reason, the name of *Sidetes*, which, in the Syrian language, signifies the *hunter*.

From 1 Macc.
v. 1. 2 Macc.
x. 11. and
Jos. lib. xii.
c. 14. to the
end of 1 and
2 Macc. and
of Jos. lib.
xiii. c. 19.

Before Antiochus landed in Syria, (to gain Simon over to his interest) he wrote him a letter, (b) wherein he made him many grants, and promised him more; but as soon as he was settled in the kingdom, he forgot his promises, and sent an ambassador, demanding him to deliver up Joppa and Gazara, and other places, or else to pay him a thousand talents of silver for them. (c) These conditions were thought too unreasonable to be complied with; and therefore, when Antiochus sent an army, under the command of Cendebeus, to enforce them, Simon, though very far advanced in years, with a juvenile courage prepared to give him a warm reception, and with his two sons, Judas and John, (who was afterwards called Hyrcanus) put his army to flight almost at the first onset, and in the pursuit cut off a great number of them: But to be revenged of him for this defeat Antiochus concerted the most abominable measures.

Simon had a son-in-law named Ptolemy, whom he had appointed governor of the plains of Jericho. (d) This man, who was rich and ambitious, had laid a design (which he communicated to Antiochus) for the usurpation of the government to himself; but this could not well be done without the destruction of Simon and his family. As Simon, therefore, and two of his sons, Judas and Mattathias, were making a progress through the cities of Judah, when they came to Jericho, Ptolemy invited them to an entertainment which he had prepared for them in a castle of his own building: But while they were drinking and making merry, he caused them, and all that attended them, to be assassinated; and thinking thereupon to make himself master of the whole land, he sent a party to Gazara, where John Hyrcanus †², Simon's third son, resided, with a design to slay him likewise. But Hyrcanus having had intelligence of what passed at Jericho, was prepared to receive his intended murderers; and having dispatched them, hastened to Jerusalem to secure the city and the mount of the temple, against those whom the traitor had sent to take possession of both. After this Hyrcanus was declared high priest and prince of the Jews, in the place of his father Simon, who was greatly †³

(a) *Joseph. Antiq. lib. xiii. c. 12.*

† It is a city of Syria, lying upon the Orontes, and was built (as is believed) either by Seleucus, the first king of Syria, or by his son Antiochus Soter, in honour of queen Apamea, the wife of Seleucus, the mother of Antiochus. *Calmet's Dictionary* under the word.

(b) 1 Maccab. xv. 2—5. (c) Chap. xv. 30—36.

(d) 1 Maccab. xvi. 14—22. *Joseph. Antiquities, lib. xiii. c. 14.*

†² Why this captain was called Hyrcanus, some impute to the victory which he obtained over Hyrcanus, whom the books of the Maccabees and Josephus call Cendebeus, though others say that he had this name from a gallant action against the Hircanians, perhaps in the expedition wherein he accompanied Alexander Sidetes beyond the Euphrates.

Calmet's Dictionary under the word.

†³ The commendation which the author of the first book of the Maccabees (chap. xiv. 4, &c.) bestows upon Simon, is worth our observation; for therein he tells us, that he "sought the good of the nation" in every thing, "so that his authority always pleased them well:" That, during his administration, whilst Syria and other neighbouring kingdoms were almost destroyed by wars, the Jews lived quietly, "every man under his own vine and fig-tree, enjoying without fear the fruits of their labours, and beholding with pleasure the flourishing state of their country; their trade increased by the reduction of Joppa, and other maritime places; their territories enlarged; their armies well disciplined; their towns and fortresses well garrisoned; their religion and liberties secured; their land freed from heathen enemies, and Jewish apos-

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lamented ; but what finally became of this execrable villain *, we have no manner of account in history.

(a) Antiochus having received from Ptolemy an account of the death of Simon and his sons, thought that he had now a fair opportunity to reduce Judea again under the Syrian empire ; and therefore he immediately marched a large army thither ; and having over-run the country, and driven Hyrcanus out of the field, he shut him up and all his forces within the walls of Jerusalem, and there besieged him. The siege was carried on vigorously ; and the defence of the place was executed as gallantly ; But Hyrcanus being distressed for want of provisions for so vast a number of people as was in the city, was forced to sue for peace, which was granted him upon these terms, that the besieged should deliver up their arms ; that Jerusalem should be dismantled ; that tribute should be paid to the king for Joppa and the other towns which were held by the Jews out of Judea ; and that, to buy off the fortress of Jerusalem from being rebuilt (which Antiochus much insisted on), they should pay him five hundred talents *² ; three

tates ; and their friendship courted by all the nations about them, even by the Romans and Lacedemonians. He observes farther, that this Simon was no less zealous for the service of God, in exterminating apostasy, superstition, idolatry, and every thing else that was contrary to his laws ; that he was a great protector of the true Israelites, and a friend to the poor ; that he restored the service of the temple to its ancient splendour, and repaired the number of the sacred vessels : so that we need not wonder if the Jewish Sanhedrim thought no dignity or honour, while he lived, and, when he was so basely and barbarously cut off, no grief and lamentation too great, for a man of his uncommon merit. *Universal History*, lib. ii. c. 11.

* Josephus has something peculiar in his account of this vile miscreant, viz. that after he had killed his father-in-law Simon, he seized on his wife, and two of her children, and with them betook himself to a certain castle not far from Jerusalem, called Dagon ; that when Hyrcanus came to besiege it, the villain's custom was, to bring out his mother and brothers, and to whip and torment them, in the sight of all the people, with menaces to cast them headlong from the battlements, unless Hyrcanus withdrew the siege ; that when Hyrcanus, out of tenderness to his mother and brothers, was thinking of raising the siege, and suffering the traitor to escape, his mother called to him aloud from the walls, not to regard her or her childrens sufferings, but to proceed in the siege with vigour, that so he might do himself and his family right, in taking a just vengeance upon that execrable monster ; that, notwithstanding this magnanimous exhortation, he could not bear to see his relations so tortured, and therefore delayed the siege until the Sabbatical year came on, wherein the Jews were obliged to rest ; so that Ptolemy, by this means being delivered from the war and the siege, (after he had slain the mother and brothers of Hyrcanus) withdrew to Zeno, surnamed Catyla, a tyrant, who at that time had usurped to himself the government of Philadelphia. *Antiq. lib. xiii. c. 15.* But our learned Usher is of opinion, that this whole account of Josephus is fabulous.

(a) 1 Maceab. xvi. 18. *Joseph. Antiq. lib. xiii. c. 16.*

*² Josephus tells us, that Hyrcanus, to find money for this and other occasions of the government, broke up the sepulchre of David, and took from thence three thousand talents, and that Herod the Great did afterwards the like, *Antiq. lib. xvii. c. 16.* and *lib. xvi. c. 11.* But both these stories are highly improbable. David had now been dead near nine hundred years, and what is told of this treasure, supposes it to have been buried with him all this time. It supposes, that as oft as the city of Jerusalem, the palace, and the temple, during the reigns of the kings of Judah, had been plundered of all their wealth and treasure by prevailing enemies, this dead stock still remained safe from all rifle or violation. It supposes, that as oft as these kings were forced to take all the treasure that was found in the house of the Lord, as well as in their own, to relieve the exigencies of the state, they never meddled with this, that was uselessly buried with David in his grave. It supposes, that when one of the worst of their kings (2 Kings xv. 8, &c. and 2 Chron. xxviii. 21, &c.) plundered the temple of its sacred vessels, and cut them in pieces, to melt them down into money for his common occasions ; and that when one of the best of them (2 Kings xviii. 15, 16.) was forced to cut off the gold where-with the gates and pillars of the temple were overlaid, to bribe a destroying enemy, this useless treasure still continued untouched. Nay, it supposes, that when Nebuchadnezzar destroyed both the city and temple of Jerusalem, so that for many years they both lay in rubbish, this treasure in David's sepulchre lay all the while safe and secure under it ; and that when Antiochus Epiphanes, in like manner, destroyed the city, and robbed the temple of all that he could find, this treasure still escaped his rapacious hands, nor was ever molested, till Hyrcanus, at this time, was forced to make bold with it : All which suppositions seem highly improbable, and beyond belief. There is this, however, to be said in the matter, that as there certainly was a bank or treasury in the temple, where money was laid up for the support of the poor, for the relief of widows and fatherless children, and for the maintenance of Divine service, and where the great men and rich men of the nation were used to deposit their wealth for its better security ; it is not

hundred down in hand, and the other two in a reasonable time, for which they were to give hostages.

The treaty being thus concluded, Hyrcanus invited the king and his army into the city, where he gave them a splendid and most magnificent reception, and afterwards, with some of his forces, attended him to the Parthian war: For Antiochus, under pretence of rescuing his brother Demetrius Nicanor from the hands of Phraortes king of Parthia, who had long detained him as prisoner, marched against him with a powerful army. In three pitched battles he gained the victory, and recovered Babylonia, Medea, and some other provinces that formerly belonged to the Syrian monarchy; and as Hyrcanus had his share in all these actions, he returned with the glory of them at the end of the year; but Antiochus (a) and his army, who chose to winter in the east, were all in one night † destroyed by the inhabitants of the country.

In the mean time Demetrius (b) whom Phraortes †² had set at liberty, was returned to Syria, and upon his brother's death had recovered his kingdom; but still persisting in his vicious courses, and tyrannical way of government, he had not been long reinstated before his subjects rebelled against him; and one Alexander Zabina, pretending to be the son of Alexander Balas, laid claim to his crown; and by the assistance of Ptolemy Physcon, king of Egypt, (c) defeated him in a pitched battle. Demetrius fled for refuge to Ptolemais, where his wife Cleopatra †³ then resided; but she ordered the gates to be shut against him, so that he was forced to betake himself for refuge to Tyre, where he fell into the hands of his enemies, who first made him prisoner, and then put him to death. Zabina, by this means, ascended the throne of Syria, but he did not sit long there; for Physcon, expecting that he should hold it in homage from him, which the other was not inclinable to do, resolved to pull him down as fast as he had set him up; and therefore, having married his daughter Tryphæna to Antiochus Gryphus, the son of the late Demetrius, he assisted him with an army, which vanquished Zabina, and compelled him to shut himself up in Antioch: But the Antiochians, being informed that he intended to rob their temple of Jupiter of a golden statue (which was very massy), to enable him to carry on the war, thrust him out from thence; so that, wandering from place to place, he fell at last into the hands of those who carried him to Antiochus, by whose direction he was put to death.

improbable, that upon the account of the frequent invasions and depredations they were liable to, this treasure might be kept in some secret and subterraneous place, unknown to all but such as were at the head of affairs; that Hyrcanus, being now under great difficulty to raise money, might borrow it out of this bank, until better times enabled him to repay it; and that Herod, when he plundered it quite, might trump up this plausible story, that it neither belonged to church nor poor, nor any private person, but had been deposited there by David and his successors, as a proper supply for the state in times of need. *Prideaux's Connection*, Anno 135. and *Universal History*, lib. ii. c. 11.

(a) *Justin*, lib. xxxviii.

† The army, which, together with its attendants, amounted to the number of near four hundred thousand persons, being forced to disperse all over the country, were quartered at too great a distance from each other to be able in any time to gather together in a body; and as they had grievously oppressed all places wherever they lay, the inhabitants took the advantage of this their dispersion, and conspired with the Parthians, in one and the same day, to fall upon

them in their several quarters, and cut their throats; which accordingly they did: and when Antiochus, with the forces which he had about him, hastened to the assistance of the quarters that were near him, he was overpowered, and slain; so that of this numerous army there scarce returned a man into Syria to carry the doleful news of this terrible overthrow. Phraortes, however, (who was then king of Parthia) caused the body of Antiochus to be taken up from among the dead, and having put it in a silver coffin, sent it honourably into Syria, to be there buried among his ancestors. *Justin*, lib. xxxviii. c. 12. *Joseph. Antiq.* lib. xiii. c. 16. *Apion*, de Syriacis.

(b) *Justin*, lib. xxxviii. *Joseph. Antiq.* lib. xiii. c. 16.

†² The reason of his releasing Demetrius, and sending him into Syria, was, that, by raising troubles there for the recovery of his crown, he might force Antiochus to return, in order to suppress them. *Prideaux's Connection*, Anno 130.

(c) *Justin*, lib. xxxix. c. 1. and 2. *Joseph. Antiq.* lib. xiii. c. 17.

†³ This Cleopatra was the daughter of Ptolemy Philometer king of Egypt, and Cleopatra his wife.

From 1 Macc.
v. 1. 2 Macc.
x. 11. and
Jos. lib. xii.
c. 14. to the
end of 1 and
2 Macc. and
of Jos. lib.
xiii. c. 19.

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or 164

During these divisions and disturbances Hyrcanus laid hold on the opportunity, not only to enlarge his own territories, but to shake off the Syrian yoke likewise, and make himself wholly independent. He built the stately tower, or rather castle of Baris †, upon a steep rock, that was fifty cubits high, and on all sides inaccessible except towards the temple. He took several cities, which the great draughts of men the kings of Syria had made for their foreign expeditions, had left unprovided with garrisons: He subdued Shechem, the chief seat of the sect of the Samaritans, and destroyed their temple which Sanballat had built them on Mount Gerazzim: (a) He conquered the Idumæans, and prevailed with them all to become proselytes †² to the Jewish religion, so that thenceforward they were incorporated into the same church and nation, and in time lost the name of Idumæans or Edomites, and were called Jews: He renewed the alliance with the Romans, and, by a decree * from them, obtained greater privileges and advantages than the Jews ever had before: And now, being much increased in riches and power, he sent his two sons, Aristobalus and Antigonus, to besiege Samaria, who on this occasion gave good proofs of their valour and conduct. The place held out for a whole year; but being forced to surrender at last, by the direction of Hyrcanus it was utterly demolished: for he caused not only the houses and walls to be pulled down and razed, but trenches to be dug every way cross the ground whereon it stood, and to be filled with water that it might never again be built.

She was at first married to Alexander Balas, and afterwards to this Demetrius, in her father's lifetime. While Demetrius was detained a prisoner in Parthia, she became the wife of his brother Antiochus Sidetes; but upon the death of Sidetes, the restoration of Demetrius, and recovery of his kingdom, she returned to his bed again, but never had any great esteem for him, because, in his captivity, he had married the daughter of the king of Parthia. *Prideaux's Connection*, Anno 127.

† The word *Baris*, which is originally Chaldee, signifies properly an *house* or *castle* enclosed on every side, as this was encompassed with the wall which Simon built to stop the communication between the temple and the fortress of Acra. Here it was that Hyrcanus built an apartment for the safe keeping of his pontifical robes and ornaments, whenever he undressed himself; and here the Asmonean princes took up their abode, and made it their royal palace, until Herod ascended the throne; and having rebuilt, enlarged, and beautified it, gave it the name of Antonia, in honour of his friend M. Antony. *Universal History*, lib. ii. c. 11.

(a) *Joseph. Antiq.* lib. xiii. c. 17.

†² Among the Jews there were two sorts of proselytes, viz. the proselytes of the gate, and the proselytes of justice. 1. The proselytes of the gate were so called, because they were permitted to dwell with the Jews in the same cities; and the occasion of their name seems to have been taken from that expression in the fourth commandment, "the strangers which are within thy gates;" where the word *ger*, which we render *strangers*, does every whit as properly signify *proselytes*. Now this kind of proselytes was obliged only to renounce idolatry, and to worship God according to the law of nature, which the doctors of the Talmud reduced to seven articles, called by them the "seven precepts of the sons of Noah." Whoever performed these were looked upon as in a state of ac-

ceptance with God; and allowed not only to live quietly in their cities, but to resort likewise to their temple, there to offer up their prayers; but then they were permitted to enter no farther than into the outer court, which was called the court of the Gentiles. 2. The proselytes of justice were so called, because they took upon them to observe the whole law, both moral and ceremonial; in the latter of which some of the Jews, and especially the Pharisees, made justification to consist. The former sort of proselytes had no form of initiation, but these were admitted by baptism, sacrifice, and circumcision; and when they were thus admitted, they were received into the Jewish church, and to all the rights and privileges of church-membership, in the same manner as if they had been natural Jews. *Preface Generale sur le Nov. Test. par de Beausobre, and Lenfant, and Prideaux's Connection*, Anno 129.

* The ambassadors whom Hyrcanus sent to Rome to renew the league, which his father Simon had made with the senate, made their complaint,—That Antiochus Sidetes had made war upon the Jews, contrary to what the Romans had in their behalf decreed in that league; that they had taken from them several cities, and made them become tributary to them for others, and forced them to a dishonourable peace by besieging Jerusalem: whereupon the senate decreed, that whatever of this kind had been done against them since the time of the late treaty with Simon should be all null and void; that all the places which had either been taken from them, or made tributary by the Syrians, should be restored, and made free from all homage, tribute, and other services; that for the future, the Syrian kings should have no right to march their armies through the Jewish territories; that, for all the damages which the Syrians had done the Jews, reparation should be made them; and that ambassadors should be sent from Rome to see this decree put in execution. *Jewish Antiq.* l. xiii. c. 17.

After the taking of Samaria, the remainder of his life Hyrcanus enjoyed in full quiet from all foreign wars; but (a) towards the conclusion of it, met with some trouble from the Pharisees, a prevailing sect among the Jews. They, by their pretences to extraordinary strictness in religion, had gained to themselves a great reputation and interest among the common people; and for this reason Hyrcanus endeavoured to gain their esteem by all manner of favours. Having therefore one day invited several of their leading men to a splendid entertainment, when the banquet was over, he desired them to tell him, "If, in the conduct of his life, he had done any thing contrary to justice and religion, according to the maxims received and taught amongst them." As soon as he had ended his discourse, all began to praise his administration, and to give him all the commendations due to a brave man, and a just and worthy governor.

From 1 Macc.
v. 1. 2 Macc.
x. 14. and
Jos. lib. xii.
c. 14. to the
end of 1 and
2 Macc. and
of Jos. lib.
xiii. c. 19.

When the rest had done their encomiums, Eleazar, who had hitherto said nothing, rose up, and directing his discourse to Hyrcanus, "Since you desire (said he) to have the truth freely told you, if you would shew yourself a just man, resign the high-priesthood. and content yourself with the civil government of the nation." Hyrcanus then asking him, for what reason he gave him that advice? "because (replied he) we are assured by the testimony of the ancients among us, that your mother was a captive taken in the wars, and being therefore the son of a strange woman, you are incapable of that high office and dignity."

This was an allegation false in fact, and therefore all the company resented it with a just indignation; but Hyrcanus was so exasperated at it, that he resolved to be revenged in a very signal manner. This disposition one Jonathan, an intimate friend of his, but a zealous Sadducee, observing, took the opportunity to endeavour to set him against the whole sect of the Pharisees, (among whom Hyrcanus had been bred up) and to draw him over to that of the Sadducees. To this purpose he suggested to him,— "That this was not the single act of Eleazar, but most certainly a thing concerted by the whole party; that Eleazar, in speaking it out, was no more than the mouth of the rest; and that to satisfy himself in these particulars, he needed only refer it to them in what manner the calumniator deserved to be punished." Hyrcanus followed his advice: and therefore consulting the chief leaders of the Pharisees with relation to the penalty which he might deserve, who had thus slandered the prince, and high priest of his nation, he received for answer,— "That as calumny was no capital crime, all the punishment that it merited could be only whipping † or imprisonment;" (b) which fully convinced Hyrcanus, that what Jonathan had suggested was true, and from that very moment he became a mortal enemy to the whole sect of the Pharisees. Their traditional constitutions he forthwith abrogated; he enjoined a penalty on all that should observe them; and himself, for ever renouncing their party, went over to that of the Sadducees. But notwithstanding this, he was an excellent governor, and from the time of his father's death, having had the administration of all affairs, both in church and state, for the space of nine and twenty years, at his death he left the high-priesthood and sovereignty to Judas Aristobulus, who was the first that (in a formal manner) took upon him the title of a king by putting a diadem on his head.

(a) *Joseph. Antiq. lib. xiii. c. 18.*

† This punishment among the Jews was not to exceed forty stripes, Deut. xxv. 3, and therefore the whip wherewith it was inflicted was made with three thongs, and as each blow gave three stripes, they never inflicted upon any criminal more than thirteen, because thirteen of these blows made thirty-nine stripes, and to have added another blow would

have been a transgression of the law, by inflicting two stripes more than what was prescribed. Rather than do this therefore, the usual way was to give one too few, and therefore St Paul tells us, 2 Cor. xi. 24. that when he was whipped by the Jews, "he received forty stripes, save one." *Prideaux's Connection* in the Notes, Anno 108.

(b) *Joseph. Antiq. lib. xiii. c. 18.*

THE OBJECTION.

A. M. 3841, "IN the Asmonæan family there was indeed a race of heroes, great warriors, and
&c. or 5247. zealous defenders of their country's laws and liberties; and yet, if we look into their
Ant. Chris. conduct, (even in those books that were wrote on purpose to aggrandise their fame, ra-
163. &c. rather than give us the real history) we shall meet with several passages that will not
or 164. bear examination.

Judas Maccabæus was certainly the principal character among them; and yet, to say nothing of his prodigally throwing away both his own and his soldiers lives, by engaging the enemy (contrary to the persuasion of his friends) with a force no ways competent, (*a*) with no more than eight hundred against two and twenty thousand; we cannot but think that the cruelty, (*b*) which he exercised upon the Ephraimites, in putting all the males to the sword, razing their city, and riding in triumph, as it were, over the dead bodies of the slain, merely for refusing to open their gates to his army, were actions unbecoming the spirit of a generous conqueror.

To say nothing of those prodigious elephants (*c*), which, with strong wooden towers on their backs, could carry thirty-two men and their arms, (a paradox which Bochart (*d*) himself looks upon as incredible), we cannot but think that Eleazar's exposing himself to certain death by killing one of these elephants, even though he could not but foresee that it would infallibly fall upon him and crush him, was an act of fool-hardiness, which the end he proposed (*e*) "of delivering his people, and getting himself a perpetual name," could no more justify than the pretence (*f*) "of not falling into the hands of the wicked," could acquit Razis (in stabbing himself, pulling out his bowels, and casting them among his enemies) from the imputation of rage, madness, and self-murder.

Reasons of state, we allow, may sway princes in their alliances, their friendships and negociations; but in the illustrious house of the Asmonæans, to find Jonathan (*g*) joined in league with two known impostors against the rightful heirs of the crown of Syria; to find Hyrcanus destroying the famous city of Samaria, and laying the whole place desolate, merely because it was the seat of a contrary sect; and, notwithstanding this, to find him, (*h*) upon a slender disgust, turning Sadducee, and adjoining himself to a set of people who had renounced all belief of a resurrection and future state, shews, as if neither had had any great sense of honour, humanity, or religion, but in what they did consulted chiefly their interest and advantage, their resentment and revenge."

ANSWER. THE name of Maccabees relates not only to Judas and his brothers, but to all those that joined with them in the same cause; and not only to them, but also to all others who suffered in the like cause under any of the Grecian kings, whether of Syria or Egypt, though some of them lived long before them. Thus those who suffered under Ptolemy Philopater at Alexandria, fifty years before the time of Judas, were afterwards called Maccabees, as were likewise Eleazar, and the mother and her seven sons, though

(*a*) 1 Maccab. ix. 6. &c.
Animal. sacris, part i. lib. ii. c. 37.

(*g*) 1 Maccab. x. 47.

(*b*) Chap. v. 46, &c.

(*e*) 1 Maccab. vi. 43. &c.

(*h*) *Joseph. Antiq.* lib. xiii. c. 18.

(*c*) Chap. vi. 37, &c.

(*d*) *De*

(*f*) 2 Maccab. xiv. 42.

they suffered likewise before Judas erected the standard, which gave occasion to the name. From 1 Macc. v. 1. 2 Macc. x. 11. and Jos. lib. xii. c. 14. to the end of 1 and 2 Macc. and of Jos. lib. xiii. c. 19.

(a) As therefore those books which give us the history of Judas and his brethren, and their wars against the Syrian kings, in defence of their religion and liberties, are called the First and Second Books of the Maccabees; so that which gives us the history of those who in the like cause, under Ptolemy Philopater, were exposed to his elephants at Alexandria, is called the Third Book of the Maccabees; as that which contains the account of the martyrdom of Eleazar, and of the seven brothers and their mother, is called the Fourth.

(b) According to the order of time, indeed, and the subject-matter which they treat of, these books are wrong placed; for the third should be set first, the second placed before the first, and the fourth immediately after it; so that (to reduce them to right order) the first should be put in the place of the third, and the third in the place of the first. Grotius indeed is of opinion, that the third book, though it treats of matters antecedent to what is the subject of the first and second, was nevertheless wrote after them, even after the book of Ecclesiasticus, and upon that account had the name of the third book given it; but the true reason of its being postponed is,—That being of less repute and authority than the two former, it has always been reckoned after them, according to the order of dignity, though it be before them in the order of time.

The first of these books (c) was originally written in the Chaldee † language of the Jerusalem dialect, which was the only language spoken in Judea after the return from the Babylonish captivity, and is a very accurate and excellent history, coming nearest to the style and manner of the sacred historical writings of any extant. The second is a compilation of several pieces; of two epistles from the Jews at Jerusalem to those of Alexandria, (d) which seem to be spurious †²; of a preface preceding the history; and of the history itself, which is an abridgment of a larger work, composed by one Jason, an hellenist Jew of Cyrene; but the whole is by no means equal to the excellence and accuracy of the first. The third, †³ which seems to have been written by an Alexandrian Jew, †⁴ in the Greek language, is set off with enlargements and embellishments

(a) *Prideaux's Connection*, Anno 216.

(b) *Calmet's Preface sur le 3 Liv. des Maccabees*.

(c) *Prideaux's Connection*, Anno 166.

† It was extant in this language in the time of St Jerom; for he tells us, that he had seen it, and that the title which it then bore was *Sharbit sar bene El*, i. e. “the sceptre of the prince of the sons of God,” a title which well suited Judas, who was so valiant a commander of God's people then under persecution. From the Chaldee it was translated into Greek by Theodotian, as some think, though others account that version elder; and from the Greek both the Latin translation and our English did proceed. *Prideaux's Connection*, Anno 166.

(d) *Prideaux's Connection*, Anno 166.

†² The former of these epistles calls the feast of the dedication *Σκηνοπηγία ἐν Κισλεῦ*, i. e. *the feast of making tabernacles or booths in Cisleu*. Now as the month Cisleu fell in the middle of winter, it can hardly be presumed that the people could either lie abroad in these booths, or find green boughs enough at this time of the year wherewith to make them. This is an incongruity enough to explode the former epistle. And then, as to the second, it is not only written in the name of Judas Maccabæus, who was slain six and thirty years before the date which it bears, but also

contains such fabulous and absurd stuff as could never have been written by the great council of the Jews assembled at Jerusalem for the whole nation, as this pretends to be. *Prideaux's Connection*, Anno 166.

†³ This book, though it is in most of the ancient manuscript copies of the Greek Septuagint, and quoted by several fathers as an holy and divine book, yet was it never inserted in the vulgar Latin translation of the Bible; and as our first English translations were made from that, none of them have it among the Apocryphal books, nor has it ever since been added, though it certainly deserves a place therein much better than several other pieces that are there. *Prideaux's Connection*, Anno 214. [This is a mistake. It was added to the other books in Becke's Bible (1551), and, lastly, in a new version, in Bishop Wilson's Bible.]

†⁴ To this day it is extant in most of the ancient manuscript copies of the Greek Septuagint; as particularly in the Alexandrian manuscript in our king's library, and in the Vatican manuscript at Rome. But as it was never inserted into the vulgar Latin version of the Bible, and as that version was the only one in use through the whole Western church, until the reformation, it thence came to pass, that in the first

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&c. or 5247.
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of the author's own invention ; but as to the main ground-work of it, or the reality of such a persecution raised against the Jews at Alexandria, it is undoubtedly true ; and though its style be a little too theatrical, its sentiments, in many places, are both beautiful and sublime. The fourth, † which is generally allowed to be the same with what is ascribed to Josephus, the Jewish historian, under the title of "the Governing Power of Reason," is designed to enlarge and adorn the history of old Eleazar, and of the seven brothers, who with their mother suffered martyrdom under Antiochus, as it is related more succinctly in the second book of (a) Maccabees.

The author of the epistle to the Hebrews (b) has stamped some authority upon these books, by alluding to their history, and the punishment which the Maccabees were made to undergo ; but we must not therefore receive them as canonical, because, according to the report of St Jérôme, neither the Jewish nor the Christian church ever looked upon them in that capacity. "Maccabæorum libros legit quidem ecclesia, sed eos inter canonicas Scripturas non recipit." They read them as books which contained lessons of wholesome instruction, and excellent examples of worthy patriots, and glorious martyrs, suffering manfully in the defence of their religion and liberty, and (c) "not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection."

(d) In the whole compass of history, where can we find a pattern in all respects equal to Judas Maccabæus ? Most of the commanders we read of were carried away with their ambition, vanity, or vain-glory ; and, while they valued themselves upon the subduction of others, had no rule or command over their own passions. But in this Jewish leader, we find all the characters of a great hero ; courage and intrepidity, guided by counsel and wisdom, and without any alloy either of rashness or pride. And what a profound knowledge he had of the laws of God, and the principles of true morality, every speech that he makes to his men, when he is animating them to the combat, and inspiring them with a contempt of the greatest dangers, is a sufficient indication.

He died ; indeed, a little unfortunately, and when his army had forsook him, encountered his enemies with an incompetent strength ; but as he had all along fought under the protection of God's good Providence, he had no more reason to be diffident at this time than he had been formerly. In his first engagement with the Syrians, when he was to encounter (e) "forty thousand horse and seven thousand foot," he made proclamation in the camp, that all such (f) "as had betrothed wives, or were building houses, or planting vineyards, or were any ways afraid," might return home, which could not but reduce his army considerably ; and yet we find him, with this handful of men, routing three generals that were sent against him at once ; forcing and burning their camp ; defeating their troops, and returning loaded with their spoils. His notion was, that God could save with a few as well as with a multitude ; and therefore he might look on the desertion of his forces as a providential thing, to make the victory more conspicuous, and to magnify the Divine interposition in his deliverance.

(g) "The people that are with thee, says the Lord to Gideon, are too many for me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel vaunt themselves against me, saying, Mine hand hath saved me : proclaim therefore in the tents of the people, that whosoever is fearful and afraid, let him return, and depart from Mount Gilead ;" which reduced the Jewish army to ten thousand, and these again, by another expedient, were re-

translations which we have of the Bible in the English, the third book of Maccabees has never yet been inserted among other Apocryphal tracts, though it certainly deserves a place there much better than some parts of the second book of the Maccabees. *Prideaux's Connection*, Anno 216.

† This book, in like manner, though it be found in most of the ancient Greek manuscripts, is not to be

met with in any of our Latin Bibles, and has therefore no place among our Apocryphal books. *Prideaux's Connection*, Anno 216.

(a) Chap. vi. and vii.

(b) Heb. xi. 35, &c.

(c) Ibid.

(d) *Calmet's Commentary* on 1 Maccab. ix. 18.

(e) 1 Maccab. iii. 39.

(f) Ibid. ver. 56.

(g) Judges vii. 2, &c.

duced to three hundred; and yet even these, by the assistance of the Lord of Hosts, utterly subdued the vast army of the Midianites. Upon this presumption then, that Judas thought his army under the care and direction of the same Lord of Hosts, there was no discouragement in the desertion of his forces, nor any false reasoning in his speech: "If our time be come, let us die manfully for our bretheen;" which, in the present juncture of our affairs, is the best thing we can do: but, if it be not, God, we know, is able to give us victory, and to defend us. For how often have we experienced the effects of his Almighty Power? Is not conquest always in his hands? Or is there any difference, with regard to him, between a larger or a smaller number?" These seem to be the reasons that determined Judas in his choice of engaging the enemy, though superior in force: and if these reasons are built upon right notions of God, and confirmed by a long experience of his goodness, they will certainly clear him from all imputation of rashness, or presumptuous tempting of God in this action: An action for which St Ambrose, in particular, has represented him as a perfect model of true heroism: for (a) "*Habes hic,*" says he, "*fortitudinem bellicam, in quâ non mediocris honesti et decori forma est, quod mortem servituti præferat, ac turpitudini.*"

From 1 Macc.
v. 1. 2 Macc.
x. 11. and
Jos. lib. xii.
c. 14. to the
end of 1 and
2 Macc. and
of Jos. lib.
xiii. c. 19.

The message which Moses sent to the king of Edom, delivered in these words:—"Let us pass, I pray thee, through thy country. We will not pass through the fields, or through the vineyards, neither will we drink of the water of thy wells. We will go by the king's high-way; we will not turn to the right hand or the left, until we have passed thy borders: And Edom said unto him, Thou shalt not pass by me, lest I come out against thee with the sword." But hereupon a question has arisen, whether the Edomites might lawfully, and according to the rules of strict right, deny the Israelites a passage through their country.

(b) Selden is of opinion, that princes have always a right to deny foreign troops a passage through their country, not only to preserve their territories from being invaded, and their subjects from being plundered, but to prevent their being corrupted likewise by the introduction of strange manners and customs into their kingdom. But (c) Grotius, on the other hand, asserts, that this refusal of the Edomites was an act contrary to the just rights of human society; that, after the promise which the Israelites had made, of marching through their country quietly and inoffensively, they might very justly have fallen upon the Edomites, had they not been restrained by a Divine prohibition; that, for this very cause, the Greeks thought proper to make war upon the kings of Mysia; and that the principal reason which the powers of Christendom gave for their carrying their arms against the Saracens, was, because they hindered their brethren going in pilgrimage to Jerusalem from passing through their country.

However the sentiments of these two great men may be, it is certain that Gideon's severity against the inhabitants of Succoth, for denying his army some necessary refreshments, when they were pursuing the enemy, is justified upon the presumption, that such a refusal was a kind of rebellion against the state; that those who exposed their lives for the public safety, had a right to be maintained at the public expence; and that "no man might call any thing his own," when a demand of this nature came upon him. And if Gideon, (d) who was sent immediately by an angel to deliver his brethren, and in all his achievements was supported by the Spirit of God, thought it no injustice to put the people of Succoth (e) to exquisite torture, for denying his army what they wanted; why might not Judas give the people of Ephron up to military execution, for being so cruel and inhuman as to deny him a passage through their city, when there was no possibility of taking his rout any other way?

What the particular situation of this Ephron was we can no where learn; but the

(a) Ambros. lib. i. Offic. c. 41.
c. ii. et Mare Clausum, lib. i. c. 1.

(b) Mare Clausum, c. 20.
(d) Judges vi. 14.

(c) De Jure Belli et Pacis, lib. ii.
(e) Chap. viii. 16.

A. M. 3841,
&c. or 5217.
Ant. Christ.
163, &c.
or 164.

author of the book of Maccabees seems to imply, that the country all about it was impassable, i. e. was very probably so full of water and morasses, that the (a) company which Judas had along with him must have been lost, had they been obliged to turn either to the right-hand or to the left. In their own defence therefore, they were necessitated to make their way through the town; and if, in the siege and sackage of it, great numbers of people were put to the sword, this was properly the effect of their own folly and obstinacy in refusing not so much to do a favour, as an act of common right, even when it was humbly requested by a general at the head of a victorious army.

The strength of the behemoth (which by most interpreters is supposed to be the elephant †) is thus expressed in the book of Job: (b) "His bones are as strong pieces of brass, and his small bones like bars of iron;" and therefore it is no wonder that creatures of this prodigious strength (when the method of fighting was chiefly by force) should be made use of in all military expeditions. (c) Some of these creatures have been known to carry two canons fastened together by a cable rope, of three thousand pounds weight each, for five hundred paces together, with their teeth; and what reason have we to doubt but that they are able to carry a much greater weight upon their backs?

The largest and strongest species of these animals is said to be bred in India, (for those that come out of Africa are not near so big) and therefore if we suppose that the elephants which Antiochus carried to the wars with him were of this Indian breed, (as (d) the circumstances of the whole story make it highly probable that they were) there cannot be so much difficulty as is imagined, in one of these creatures carrying upon its back two and thirty men light armed, (as archers are known to be) with towers, or other such vehicles as might be thought proper to give them an ascendant in the fight, and so secure them from the darts and other weapons of the enemy. For, upon supposition that each of those men, one with another, weighed an hundred and fifty pounds, the amount of the weight of thirty-two will be no more than four thousand eight hundred pounds; and yet it is a common thing to meet with elephants of a moderate size that will carry you five or six thousand pounds weight; so that, upon the lowest computation, we have full two thousand pounds weight allowed for the wooden machine, wherein the slingers and archers were seated and secured.

The danger indeed of approaching this animal, with such a number of armed men upon its back, is very visible; but most of the Jewish doctors and fathers of the Christian church, look upon Eleazar's action in killing the royal elephant, (as he took it to be) though at the expence of his own life, as a singular instance of courage and magnanimity. Fool hardness it would have been, had he been certainly persuaded that the creature would have fallen upon him so directly and so suddenly as he did; but why might he not rather think that it might possibly tumble down on one side, so as to miss him, or live for some moments after it had received the wound, so as to give him an opportunity to escape?

(e) The motives which the history assigns for his adventuring upon this exploit are not discommendable. The preservation of our laws, liberties, and religion, requires, upon a proper occasion, the hazarding our lives: Our reputation too is a natural good, which we are not only bound to preserve, but, by all lawful means, allowed to improve and increase; and therefore charity (f) will not suffer us (without very good reasons) to believe, that these motives, which themselves were laudable, lost all their merit,

(a) 1 Maccab. v. 45, 46. † [This seems to be a mistake. By most interpreters of the present age, the *behemoth* is supposed to be the *hippopotamus* or river-horse.] (b) 1 Maccab. xl. 18.
(c) *Calmet's* Commentary on 1 Maccab. vi. 37. (d) *Ibid.* (e) 1 Maccab. vi. 44.
(f) *Ibid.* ver. 44.

and were adulterated by any sinister ends that Eleazar might propose to himself. We cannot, I say, without rashness, blame him, or deny him that justice which we owe to all actions that are apparently commendable, i. e. to believe them really good, so long as we have no proofs to the contrary: And as it is no uncommon thing in such heroic acts as these, to find persons (under the Jewish economy more especially) instigated by a Divine impulse, it will best become us to suspend our judgments concerning this action of Eleazar's until we can find arguments to prove that he had no motive extraordinary to attempt it *.

From 1 Macc.
v. 1. 2 Macc.
x. 11. and
Jos. lib. xii.
c. 14. to the
end of 1 and
2 Macc. and
of Jos. lib.
xiii. c. 19

But there is not the like reason, I think, to suspend our judgment concerning the action of Razis, which, upon due consideration, was no better than self-murder. (a) To consider it, indeed, according to the notion which some heathens had of courage and magnanimity, contempt of death, and love of liberty, it comes nearer to what they called true heroism, than all the great actions that history has recorded of the Greeks and Romans. Nay, the Jews themselves are willing to place this man in the number of their most illustrious martyrs, and from his example (as well as some others) pretend, that, upon certain occasions, self-murder is not only allowable, but highly commendable; never considering, (b) that in the sixth commandment, it is as much prohibited as the murder of any one else; and that, if I must not shed the blood of another man, for this very reason, because (c) he is made in the image of God, I must not shed the blood of myself, because I also am a man, and made in the image of God as well as he.

(d) Razis indeed was sorely beset, and ready to have been taken by his enemies on every side; but then he should have surrendered himself to their treatment, and testified his magnanimity, not in butchering himself, but in manfully enduring whatever inflictions they laid upon him. Had the martyrs of old thought themselves at liberty to dispose of their own lives upon any emergent danger, or apprehension of suffering, we had read little of their being (e) "mocked, and scourged, and tormented," and less of their "being stoned and sawn asunder," but a great deal of their "stepping out of the world" (as some call it), when any difficulty or persecution came to press upon them.

Upon the whole, therefore, we may conclude, that as this was not the practice of those worthies of old, (f) who "obtained a good report by faith," it was not true courage, but the want of it, that put Razis upon committing this barbarous cruelty to himself; that it was pride, not patience (which is the proper virtue of a martyr), that made him fly to death, merely for refuge against those outrages which he had not strength of mind to withstand; and therefore St Austin's short reflection upon the whole is,—(g) "Factum narratum est non laudatum, et judicandum potius, quam imitandum."

This reflection indeed will hold good in several other matters related in the history of the Maccabees, viz. that the author of it neither commends nor discommends, but only relates them. Demetrius Soter, for instance, was the rightful heir to the crown of Syria, and Alexander Balas no more than a vile impostor; and yet Jonathan thought proper to adjoin himself to him, because (h) he remembered what a bitter enemy Demetrius had all along been to the Jewish interest; how oft he had sent his generals with positive orders to take his brother Judas dead or alive; and what ruin and oppres-

* [This is a feeble answer to a very foolish objection. Who ever thought of censuring Codrus king of Athens for devoting himself to death for his country; or Samson for pulling down the temple of Dagon on himself as well as his enemies; or indeed any great commander for exposing part of his army to inevitable destruction, for the safety of the remainder who could not otherwise have been saved? Eleazar knew by experience, that the armies of his enemies had uniformly gone into confusion and been easily routed on the fall of their leaders in battle; he had reason to

believe that the elephant which he attacked carried the king; and was he to blame for "putting himself in jeopardy, to the end that he might deliver his people, and get to himself a perpetual name?"]

(a) Calmet's Commentary. on 2 Maccab. xiv. 42.

(b) Bishop Fleetwood against self-murder.

(c) Gen. ix. 6.

(d) 2 Maccab. xiv. 42.

(e) Heb. xi. 36, 37.

(f) Ibid. xi. 39.

(g) Epist. 61.

(h) Prideaux's Connection, Anno 153.

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&c. or 5247.
Ant. Chris.
163, &c.
or 164.

sion his frequent invasions had brought upon the whole nation. And therefore no wonder that we find him taking a contrary part to the man, whom he looked upon as an enemy to his country. Demetrius Nicanor, in like manner, was the true heir to the same crown, and Alexander Zabina no more than a broker's son of Alexandria; and yet we find John Hyrcanus entering into a league and alliance with the latter, because indeed Demetrius had behaved so ungratefully to the Jews, (who rescued him from the rebellion of his subjects) as to load them with heavy taxes, even though he had promised them an immunity from them to engage their assistance,

The truth is, the kingdom of Syria was always in hostility with Judea. Its kings were tyrants, and great persecutors of the Jewish religion; and therefore what reason had any Jewish prince to trouble himself with the right of succession in an enemy's country? all that he seemed to be concerned in was, (a) to make what advantages he could of their divisions, and by adjoining himself to the party, from whence he might expect the best treatment and support, to secure and establish his own and his country's interest.

It is a mistake however to think that Hyrcanus destroyed Samaria out of the hatred which the Jews bore to the sect of the Samaritans, because, upon examination, we shall find, that none of that sect did at that time live in that place. (b) The ancient Samaritans, who were of the sect that worshipped God on mount Gerizzim, had slain in a tumult, (as we related before) one Andromachus, a favourite of Alexander the Great, whom he had constituted governor of Syria; and in revenge for this base act Alexander had expelled them all from Samaria, and in their stead new-planted the city with a colony of Macedonians, Greeks, and Syrians mixed together, and they were the descendants of those who inhabited Samaria, when Hyrcanus made war against it; for the expelled Samaritans retired to Sechem, where they settled their abode, and made it the head seat of their sect ever since.

In like manner, it is a mistake to think that, because Hyrcanus is said to have left the Pharisees and adjoined himself to the Sadducees, that therefore he espoused their doctrine against the resurrection and a future state. (c) On the contrary, it seems highly probable, that at this time the Sadducees had gone no farther in the doctrine of their sect than their rejecting all the unwritten traditions which the Pharisees held in so much veneration. Josephus mentions no other difference in his time * between them; nor does he say, that Hyrcanus went over to the Sadducees in any other particular, than in the abolishing the traditional constitutions of the Pharisees; and therefore we can hardly think, that so good and righteous a man as he is represented to have been, would, upon any provocation whatever, have been induced to renounce the great and fundamental articles of his religion; but it can be no diminution to his character, we hope, that he made it his business to oppose those false interpretations of the law, which our blessed Saviour, in the course of his ministry, so severely condemned.

(a) *Prideaux's Connection*, Anno 331.

(b) *Ibid* 109.

(c) *Ibid*. 108.

* [This is certainly a mistake. Long before the time of Josephus, the Sadducees denied not only the

resurrection of the dead, but the existence of the separate soul after death, and indeed the existence of angels or any other created spirits.]

DISSERTATION IV.

OF THE ORIGINAL AND TENETS OF THE JEWISH SECTS.

IT seems very probable indeed, that during the times of the prophets, who, by their commerce with God, were immediately instructed in his will, no disputes about matters of religion could possibly arise, because their authority was sufficient for the decision of every controversy; but that when this race of prophets disappeared, and their authority ceased, men soon began to wrangle and dispute, and to form themselves into different sects and parties upon the first occasion that offered.

From 1 Macc.
v. 1. 1 Macc.
x. 11. and
Jos. lib. xii.
c. 14. to the
end of 1 and
2 Macc. and
of Jos. lib.
xiii. c. 19.

After the return of the people from Babylon, Joshua the high priest, and Zerubbabel the governor, together with the chief elders their contemporaries, and others that afterwards succeeded them, collected together all the ancient and approved usages of the Jewish church which had been in practice before the captivity. These, and whatever else pretended to be of the like nature, Ezra brought under a review, and after due examination, having settled them by his approbation and authority, he thereby gave birth to what the Jews call their Oral Law. For (a) they pretend, that when God gave unto Moses the law on Mount Sinai, he gave him, at the same time, the interpretation of it, with a strict injunction to commit the former to writing, but to deliver the other down to posterity only by word of mouth; that, pursuant to this injunction, Moses wrote several copies of the law, which he left behind him among the several tribes, but in the interpretation of it, he took care more especially to instruct his successor Joshua; that after his death, Joshua delivered this interpretation, or oral law, to the elders who succeeded him, and that they delivered it to the prophets, who transmitted it down to each other until it came to Jeremiah; that Jeremiah delivered it to Baruch; Baruch to Ezra; Ezra to the men of the great synagogue, until it came to Simon the Just; and that Simon delivered it to others, who handed it down, in a continued succession, until it came to Rabbah Judah Hakkadosh, who wrote it into the book which they call the *Mishnah*.

But all this is a mere fiction, spun out of the fertile invention of the Talmudists; and the little truth that there seems to be in it is only this,—That after the death of Simon the Just there arose a sort of men (whom the Jews call the *Tannaim* or *Mishnical doctors*), that made it their business to study and descant upon these traditions, which had been received, and allowed by Ezra and the men of the great synagogue, to draw such consequences and inferences from them as they thought proper; to ingraft these into the body of the ancient traditions; and to expect from others that they should receive them as if they had been as authentic as the other. But this imposition was too gross and palpable not to be attended with remonstrances from several: So that, in a short time, the Jewish church came to be divided into two grand parties, viz. those who adhered to the written law only, among whom the Sadducees were the chief, and those who, over and above this, received the traditions and constitutions of the elders, among whom the Pharisees made the greatest figure.

(b) The most ancient sect among the Jews was that of the Sadducees, which took its name from Sodoek the founder of it. This Sodoek (as the Talmudic story is) was the

(a) *Prideaux's Connection*, Anno 446.

(b) *Ibid.* *Lamy* and *Beausobre's Introduction*.

A. M. 3841,
&c. or 5217.
Ant. Chris.
163, &c.
or 164.

disciple of Antigonus Socho, who lived, according to the Jewish calculation, about three hundred years before Christ, and used often to inculcate to his disciples, that they ought to serve God disinterestedly, without any view of compensation, and not like slaves, who only serve their master for the sake of a reward: And from hence his disciples Soddock and Baithus made this wrong inference, viz. that there was no reward to be expected in another world, and consequently that the soul dies, and the body will not rise again. Whether this mistake of the doctrine of Antigonus, or, as others suppose, the dissoluteness of manners which at that time might prevail, gave occasion to the opinion of the Sadducees, but so it was, that in process of time they grew to be very impious and detestable.

They denied the resurrection of the dead, the being † of angels, and the existence of the spirits or souls of men departed. Their notion was, that there was no spiritual being but God only; that as to man, this world was his all; that at his death, his soul and body die together never to live any more; and that therefore there is no future reward or punishment. They acknowledged, indeed, that God made this world by his power, and governs it by his Providence, and for the carrying on of this government hath ordained rewards and punishments; but then they suppose, that these rewards and punishments are in this world only; and for this reason alone it was that they worshipped him, and paid obedience to his laws. All unwritten traditions, as well as all written books *, except the five books of Moses, they absolutely rejected; and the probable reason why they did so is, that they could not so well maintain these opinions, which are not so flatly contradicted in the Pentateuch as in the other sacred books, if once they admitted these books to be canonical. All supernatural helps to their duty they utterly denied; for their doctrine was, that God had made man perfect master of all

† In what sense the Sadducees denied the existence of angels, it is difficult to determine, since they certainly acknowledged the authority of the Pentateuch. Some pretend, that they accounted the invention of angels but a novel thing, and that their very name was never heard of until the return from the captivity, and therefore they rejected them; whilst others suppose, that they looked upon them as the inseparable powers of God, which, like the rays of the sun, without being parted from that planet, shine and shed their influence here below. But now, considering that the Sadducees received the five books of Moses, they could hardly entertain any such notions as these. As therein they read of frequent apparitions of angels, they could not fancy them a new invention of the Rabbins that returned from the captivity. As they saw in these books, that they properly came down from heaven upon earth, they could not imagine that they were beings inseparable from the Deity; and therefore we may suppose, that they rather looked upon them only as so many phantasms, and that, as the bodies which these angels put on had perhaps only the appearance of human bodies, the same notion they might have of the spirits which animated them; because every thing (except God) in their opinion was material. *Basnage's History of the Jews*, lib. ii. c. 6.

* Mr Basnage, in his *History of the Jews*, lib. ii. c. 6. though he allows the question to be difficult, seems to be of a contrary opinion. 1st, Because the Sadducees taught and prayed in the temple, where the prophets and other holy writers were read, as appears

from the example of Christ, who explained a passage out of Isaiah. 2dly, Because Josephus, who ought to have been well acquainted with the principles of this sect, relates of them, lib. vi. c. 9. that "they received what was written." And, 3dly, Because the Pharisees, in their disputes with them about the doctrine of the resurrection, quote, not only the writings of Moses, but those of the prophets likewise, and other hagiographers, whose authority the others do not deny, but only endeavour to elude the force of the passages that are thence produced against them. Upon the whole, therefore, Scaliger (*Elench. Trihær.* c. 16.) is of opinion, that these Sadducees did not absolutely reject all the Sacred Writings, but rather looked upon them as books composed by holy men, whose memories they revered, though they could not believe them of the like authority with the law of Moses, which to them was the only rule of faith. But notwithstanding this, "the account which is given us in the gospel (says the learned Prideaux) of the dispute which Christ had with the Sadducees plainly proves the contrary. For seeing there are so many texts in the prophets and hagiographa, which plainly and directly prove a future state and the resurrection from the dead, no other reason can be given why Christ waved all these proofs, and drew his argument only by consequence from what is said in the law, but that he knew that the Sadducees had rejected the prophets and the hagiographa, and therefore would admit of no arguments but from the law only." *Prideaux's Connection*, Anno 107.

his actions, with a full freedom to do either good or evil as he thinks fit, without any assistance to him for the one, or restraint upon him as to the other; and for this reason, because they looked upon all men to have an inherent power to make their condition better or worse, according as they took right or wrong measures, whenever they sat in judgment upon criminals, they were always remarked to pass the severest sentences: As indeed their general character was, that they were a very ill-natured sort of men, churlish and morose in their behaviour even to each other, but cruel and savage to every one besides. Their principles, one might suppose, would have naturally led them into all manner of riot and excess; but it was not always so. Some of them were men of rigid virtue and strict probity; for (a) though they had cast off the belief of a future state, yet as they admitted of a Providence, to punish vice and reward virtue in this life, their desire of present and temporal happiness put a restraint upon their appetites, and kept them within the bounds of their duty. And, for the same reason, they were not without their expectations of a Messias to come. Nay, upon this subject they argued with more consistency than the other Jews did. For, confining all their hopes to the present state of things, and looking upon him as a temporal King and Deliverer only, they had a more than ordinary interest and concern in his appearance in their lifetime, that thereby they might reap the fruits of his conquests, and enjoy the happiness which the prophets had promised during his reign. Their number was the fewest of all the sects of the Jews, but they were men of the best quality and greatest estates: And as all those who were of the greatest power and riches were cut off in the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, it is generally supposed that this whole sect then perished with them; [which, however, is very improbable.]

(b) The Jews who were carried captive into Egypt, though they kept themselves clear from the idolatry of the country, did nevertheless (about the time of Ptolemy Philometor) fall into their method of handling divinity, and were not a little fond of their allegorical interpretations. This mystical treatment of the Scriptures alarmed others, who, from the word *kara*, (c) which signifies *to read*, obtained the name of *Karraites*, i. e. such as adhered to the text, and were literal expounders of Scripture. Josephus indeed takes no notice of any people of this denomination; but his silence is no argument against their existence, because we find him omisive in other particulars of the like nature. The Herodians, for instance, a sect well known in the Gospel, and remarkable for their political as well as doctrinal principles, he makes no mention of, and might therefore well pass by the Karraites, who, having no peculiar tenets, but only that of teaching and expounding the law according to its literal sense, could not well be discriminated by the name of any particular sect. These Scripturists, as they were called, (d) when they came to be headed by Shammai, a learned doctor of the law, (who, about an hundred years before our Saviour Christ, opened a great school against Hillel, who was for the mystical way of interpretation), made a considerable figure: But at length the school of Hillel, by the determination of a voice from heaven (as was pretended) carried it against the school of Shammai; so that the Karraites were quite absorbed, till they appeared again about the sixth century after Christ.

At this time the Talmud, a vast voluminous book, which contained all the traditions of the Jewish church, was published, and a great deal of deference and veneration was required to be paid to it: But when men of learning and judgment came to look into it, and found it (as it is) stuffed with trifling and incredible stories, they rejected its authority as not deserving their belief, and betook themselves wholly to such as were of undoubted credibility, "the writings of the law and the prophets." In consequence of which there arose two parties, one standing up for the Talmud and its traditions, and

From 1 Macc.
v. 1. 2 Macc.
x. 11. and
Jos. lib. xii.
c. 14. to the
end of 1 and
2 Macc. and
of Jos. lib.
xiii. c. 19.

(a) *Basnage's History of the Jews*, lib. ii. c. 6.
Introduction, lib. i. c. 9.

(b) *Ibid.* lib. ii. c. 9.

(c) *Lamy's*

(d) *Prideaux's Connection*, Anno 37.

A. M. 3841,
&c. or 5247.
Ant. Chris
163, &c.
or 161.

the other disavowing both, as containing, in their opinion, the inventions of men, and not the doctrines and commands of God. Those who stood up for the Talmud and its traditions were chiefly the Rabbins and their followers, from whence their party had the name of Rabbinites; and the other, who were for the Scripture only, were again called Karraites, under which two names the controversy was at that time carried on between them, and so continues even to this day.

Among all the Jewish doctors, these Karraites are justly accounted the most learned set of men, but their number (in these western parts especially) is but small. (a) About the middle of the last century there was a particular account taken of them, wherein it appeared, that in Poland there were two thousand; at Caffa in Crim-Tartary, twelve hundred; at Cairo three hundred; at Damascus two hundred; at Jerusalem thirty; in Babylon an hundred; and in Persia six hundred; which, in all, amount to no more than four thousand four hundred and thirty;—a small number in comparison of the bulk of the nation which is of the party of the Rabbinites. The Pharisees were so called from the Hebrew word *Pharas*, which signifies *to separate*; because the prevailing passion, or rather ambition of this sect, was to distinguish and separate itself from the rest of the people by a greater degree of holiness and piety, but accompanied with very much affectation, and abundance of vain observances. (b) At what time this sect began first to appear, is no easy matter to determine. Josephus makes mention of them in the government of Jonathan, an hundred and forty years before Christ, as a very powerful body of men at that time; nor is it improbable that their origin was somewhat earlier, and that as soon as the Sadducees discovered their principles to the world, these men of different sentiments might not long after rise up in opposition to them: for it is evident, from the character which the Jewish historian gives of them, that, in the main articles of their belief, they were entirely repugnant to the Sadducees. (c) The Pharisees believe in a fate, says he, and attribute all things to it, but nevertheless they acknowledge the freedom of man; but how they made these two apparent incompatibles consist together, is no where sufficiently explained. They teach, that God will one day judge the world, and punish or reward men according to their merits*. They maintain, that souls are immortal, and that in the other world some will be shut up in an eternal prison, and others sent back again; but with this difference, that those of good men shall enter into the bodies of men, those of wicked men into the bodies of beasts; which exactly agrees with the famous transmigration of Pythagoras. Their adherence to the law was so exact, that, for fear of violating the least precept of it, they scrupulously observed every thing that had the least relation to it, even though the law had neither commanded nor forbidden them. Their zeal for the traditions of the elders was such, that they derived them from the same fountain with the written word itself, pretend-

(a) *Calmet's Dictionary*, under the word.

(b) Vide *Lamy's Introduction*, and *Prideaux's Connection*. (c) *Joseph. de Bello Jud. lib. ii. c. 12.*

* [If, before the coming of Christ, they admitted the resurrection of all men, which appears to me more than doubtful, it seems evident that they were the descendants of Israel alone, who, they believed, were to rise to eternal happiness. What kind of happiness their creed had provided for the chosen nation, the reader will find detailed by Josephus; Dr Prideaux, and our illustrious bishop Bull, who says:—"De impiorum exitu res erat, et ut hodie est, planè incerta: alii resurrecturos credebant, aliis contradicentibus. Quod et piorum felicitatem attinet, credebant multi eam fore diuturnam quidem, et non æternam. Deinde felicitatem illam crassam, ferream, atque ex bono-

rum corpori servientium affluentia conflata somniarunt. Quemadmodum enim nunc dierum Thalmudistæ epulas sibi fingunt, in quibus Behemothum, et Leviathanem et Bariuchne, bovem, piscem, avem esitaturi. Ita Christi quoque tempore Judæi vitam quidem post hanc felicem, sed huic nostræ similem, animo conceperunt. - - - Hinc nata erat captiosa ista Sadducæorum interrogatio Christo proposita, de muliere, quæ septem fratres successivè maritos habuit, cuinam istorum post resurrectionem denuo reddenda esset (Mat. xxii. 28.) Nimirum Sadducæi, Phariseorum antagonistæ, à Christo credebant doceri resurrectionem ex iisdem hypothesis, quibus nitebantur Pharisei. Ii autem inter alias corporis voluptates, etiam conjugii usum in futurâ vitâ mansurum existimabant." *Herm. Apost. Dissert. Post. Cap. 10. § 15.*

ing that Moses received both of them from God on Mount Sinai, and therefore ascribing an equal authority to both. They had a notion that good works were meritorious, and therefore they invented a great number of supererogatory ones, upon which they valued themselves more than upon a due observance of the law itself. Their frequent washings and ablutions, (a) their long prayers in public places, their (b) nice avoidance of reputed sinners, their fasting and great abstinence, their penance and mortification, (c) their minute payment of tythes, their (d) strict observance of the Sabbath, and (e) ostentatious enlargement of * phylacteries, were all works of this kind; which nevertheless gained them such esteem and veneration, that while the common people loved, the greater ones dreaded them, so that their power and authority in the state was considerable, though generally attended with pernicious consequences, because their hearts were evil: for, notwithstanding their shew of mighty zeal and great austerity, they were, in reality, no better than what our Saviour calls them, vain and ostentatious, spiteful and malicious, griping and voracious, lovers of themselves only, and despisers of others; insomuch that it was hard to say which was most predominant in them, their insatiable avarice, their insupportable pride, or abominable hypocrisy.

In conjunction with the Pharisees, the Scribes are often mentioned in the Scriptures of the New Testament. They were not however any particular sect, but a profession of men of divers kinds, following literature. For generally all that were any way learned among the Jews, were, in the time of our Saviour and his apostles, called *Scribes*, but especially those who, by their skill in the law and divinity of the Jews, were advanced to sit in Moses's seat, either as judges in their Sanhedrim or teachers in their schools or synagogues. Both their name and profession began immediately after the Babylonish captivity, about five hundred years before the birth of Christ; for Ezra himself was one of the first. They were a body of the most learned men of the nation, and chiefly of the sect of the Pharisees, though some of them might possibly be Karaites, or Antitraditionists, as it seems to appear by one of them asking our Saviour (f) "which was the first commandment of all," and being so highly pleased with his answer.

Those who were descended from the stock of Levi, were usually called "Scribes of the clergy;" but such as were sprung from any other tribe, were named "Scribes of the people." The business of the latter was to take care to preserve the purity of the text in all the Bibles which they copied out, and to see that no corruption was crept into the original. It was not held proper for every vulgar pen to transcribe the great mysteries of the law, and therefore this peculiar order of men was appointed to that purpose; but they did not so entirely apply themselves to it, as not to take in many other matters both of civil and religious concern, being public notaries in the Sanhedrim and courts of justice, as well as registers in the synagogues. The office of the Scribes of the clergy was to teach in public, and instruct the people, by expounding to

(a) Matth. vi. 5, &c.

(c) Matth. xxiii. 23.

(e) Chap. xxiii. 5.

(b) Luke vii. 39.

(d) Chap. xii. 2.

* The word *phylactery*, in the Greek, signifies "a place to keep any thing in;" in the Hebrew it is called *tephillim*, which signifies "prayers", because the Jews wear their phylacteries chiefly when they go to their devotion. It is a common opinion, that these phylacteries were long pieces of parchment, whereon were written certain passages out of Exodus and Deuteronomy, which they tied to their foreheads and left arm, in memory of the law; but a late explainer of the Jewish customs assures us, that they were parchment cases formed with very great nicety into their proper shapes; that the case for the head had four ca-

vities, into each of which they put a piece of parchment rolled up, wherein were written some sections of the law; but that which was for the arm had but one cavity, and into it they put one piece of parchment, wherein four passages of Scripture were written. *Lamy's* Introduction, lib. i. c. 16. The whole of this custom is founded on Exod. xiii. 9. and Deut. vi. 8. but the words are only metaphorically to be understood as a command to have God's laws perpetually before our eyes, and his deliverance always in remembrance. It cannot be denied, however, that these phylacteries were generally worn by the Jews in our Saviour's time, and were not disused so late as St Jerom's. *Lamy*, *ibid*.

(f) Mark xii. 28, &c.

A. M. 3841,
&c. or 5247.
Ant. Chris.
163, &c.
or 164.

them the law in their sermons and set discourses ; by which practice they grew into such repute in the Jewish state, that it was hard to say whether the Pharisees or they were held in the greater veneration : For what the Pharisees gained among the common people by their pretences to extraordinary sanctity, these more justly obtained by their zeal for the written word, in preserving it from the dangers of corruption, and expounding it in the ears of the people.

It is supposed, with a good deal of probability, that the sect of the Essenes began about an hundred and fifty years before Christ, and during the persecution of Antiochus Epiphanes, when great numbers of Jews were driven into the wilderness, where they inured themselves to a hard and laborious course of living. Why we find no mention made of them in all the New Testament, the probable reason may be, that the major part of them lived in Egypt, at a considerable distance from Judea, which at this time was infested with such persecutions and intestine broils, as were abhorrent to their retired and hermitic course of life, which, as it secluded them from all places of great resort, might make them less curious to enquire after our Saviour's person and doctrine, thinking, very probably, that if he was really the Messiah, he would not fail to seek and find out them ; but that if he was not, he had already enemies enough to oppose him, without their leaving the solitary and contemplative life they were accustomed to, merely to bear testimony against him. Philo, who gives a full account of these people, tells us, that they were called *Essenes*, from the Greek word *ἅγιος*, which signifies *holy*, and that there were two sorts of them : Some who, living in society and marrying, (though with a great deal of wariness and circumspection) lived in villages, and applied themselves to husbandry and other innocent trades and occupations, and were therefore called *practical* ; but others who, living a kind of monastic life, gave themselves wholly up to meditation, and were therefore called the *contemplative Essenes* : But however they differed in their manner of life, they were both of the same belief, and followed the same maxims.

They had not indeed the like traditions with the Pharisees, but as they were allegorists, they had several mystical books which served them for a rule in explaining the Sacred Writings, all of which (contrary to the Sadducees) they acknowledged and received. They believed that God governs the world, but by such an absolute predestination of every thing, as allowed mankind no liberty of choice in all their actions. They acknowledged a future state, thinking that the souls of good men went into the Fortunate Islands, while those of the wicked were shut up in subterraneous places ; but as for the resurrection of the body, and the soul's returning to it again after they were once parted, of this they had no manner of notion. All practical religion they reduced to these three kinds. 1. The love of God ; 2. The love of virtue ; and, 3. The love of mankind. 1. Their love of God expressed itself in accounting him the author of all good, and, consequently, applying to him every morning and night for the blessings they wanted ; in their abstaining from swearing, from lying, and all other sins that are abhorrent to his nature ; and in their strict observance of the Sabbath, and all other holy rites, except sacrificing ; for though they sent their gifts to the altar, yet they themselves went not thither, presuming, that the sanctity of their lives was the purest and most acceptable sacrifice to God that they could offer. 2. Their love of virtue was shewn in the government of their passions, their refraining from pleasures, their contempt of riches, their abstinence in eating, their continence, their patience, the simplicity of their speech, and the modesty of their carriage. And, 3. Their love of mankind appeared in their great benevolence and strict justice ; their charity to the poor, and hospitality to strangers ; and there needs no other proof of their love to one another than the union in which they lived. For they had the same houses, the same provisions, the same habits, the same tables ; their gains were put in the common stock ; they

divided the care of the sick among them, and honoured the elder men of their society with the same reverence as if they had been their fathers.

This strictness and regularity of theirs gave them an eminent character, and made it a matter of no small consequence to be admitted into their society: For when, after a due course of probation, any one presented himself for that purpose, they bound him under the most solemn vows and protestations, "To love and worship God, and do justice to all men; to profess himself an enemy to the wicked, and a friend to the lovers of virtue; to keep his hands from theft, and all fraudulent dealings, and his soul unpolluted with the desire of unjust gain; not to usurp upon his inferiors, nor distinguish himself from them by any ornaments of dress or apparel; not to conceal any of the mysteries of religion from his brethren, nor to disclose any to the profane, though it were to save his life; but to preserve the doctrine he professed, the books that were written of it, and the names of those from whom he had it." This was the form of admission into their communion, which whoever violated, in any gross instance, was immediately excluded, and never received again without the deepest humiliation and repentance. And if such was the religion and manner of life of the Essenes, we have less reason to be surprised at our finding some authors so much extolling their courage and magnanimity upon several occasions, as persons who, under distresses and persecutions, suffered death, and the most grievous torments, even with joy and cheerfulness, rather than say or do any thing contrary to the law of God. They are said, however, to have (a) greatly degenerated from their primitive purity of life and doctrine. In the time of Trajan and the reign of Justinian, though they were known under the pompous title of angels or angelic persons, yet were they found to come infinitely short of the beings whose names they assumed, and, upon that account, falling into a great disesteem, in a very short time † they dwindled into nothing.

There was another sect among the Jews, (b) mentioned in the gospels, which, though of later original, may not improperly be considered in this place; and that is the Herodians *, who, in their main principles, were not very different from the Sadducees. They sprang up, no doubt, in the time of Herod the Great, some twenty or thirty years before Christ, and had their denomination from him, but upon what account it is not so well agreed. The common opinion is, that they looked upon Herod as the promised Messiah: But it is a very improbable thing, that any Jews should, in the time of our Saviour's ministry, above thirty years after the death of Herod, hold him to have been the Messiah, when they found no one of those particulars which they expected from the Messiah performed by him, but rather every thing quite contrary. (c) Others therefore suppose, that they were called Herodians, because they constituted a sodality (or club as we call it) in honour of Herod at Jerusalem, as there were several in Rome in honour of their emperors *2. But since the earliest of these sodalities in Rome were not instituted till after the death of Augustus, who outlived Herod sixteen years and

(a) *Basnage's History of the Jews*, lib. ii. c. 13.

† Some indeed are of opinion, that these Essenes did renounce Judaism, and were converts to Christianity, and that such among them as were called Therapeutæ became monks, and were formed into that order by St Mark, who was the first founder of the Christian church in Alexandria. But though it seems unlikely that some of this sect might be converted, yet that the main body of them should embrace Christianity, and so be lost in the societies of Christian hermits, is far from being probable; especially since we find no traces of any such institution as monkism till after the beginning of the second century, when these Ascetics, who had formerly fled from persecution, finding the sweets of their retirement and solitude, began to mul-

tiply, and so erected themselves into bodies. *Prideaux's Connection*, Anno 107, and *Basnage's History of the Jews*, lib. ii. c. 13.

(b) Matth. xxii. 16. Mark iii. 6. Chap. viii. 15. Chap. xii. 13.

* Accordingly St Mark (Chap. viii. 15.) calls that the leaven of Herod, which Christ styles the leaven of the Sadducees, Matth. xvi. 6.

(c) *Scaliger in Animadver. ad Eusebii Chron. et Casaubon Exercit. &c.*

*2 Such were the Augustales, Adrianales, Antonini, &c. constituted in honour of Augustus, Adrian, and Antoninus, and the rest of the emperors after their death. *Prideaux's Connection*, Anno 107.

From 1 Macc.
v. 1. 2 Macc.
x. 11. and
Jos. lib. xii.
c. 14. to the
end of 1 and
2 Macc. and
of Jos. lib.
xiii. c. 19.

A. M. 3841, upwards, this could be no pattern or foundation for the institution of the like in memory of Herod, who died so long before.

&c. or 5247.
Ant. Chris.
163, &c.
or 164.

Herod, no doubt, came into the government with great opposition; and as he was by birth a foreigner, and had made his entrance with much blood, his title was not acknowledged by the greater part of the Jews, especially as long as Antigonus was alive. Those therefore that would own his title and espouse his interest, might for this reason, perhaps, go under the name of Herodians; but this seems not to be the whole of the matter. Our blessed Saviour cautions his disciples (a) "against the leaven (i. e. against the evil and erroneous tenets) of Herod;" which seems to imply that Herod himself was the author of some false notions, which constituted a particular sect, differing from the other sects of the Jews; and that his followers, imbibing these principles from him, had the denomination of Herodians. (b) For as much then that Herod (c), the better to secure his possession of the throne, had put himself under the Roman protection, (d) contrary to an express precept of the law; and, to ingratiate himself with the great men at Rome, built temples, and erected images in them for idolatrous worship, excusing himself to the Jews, that all this he did purely in compliance to the commands he was necessitated to obey, and might probably lay it down for a maxim in religion, that in case of compulsion it was lawful to submit to unjust injunctions; there is no wonder at all that some bold men should rise up to justify the king's practice, and (by the royal permission) call themselves by his name, whose distinguishing tenet might probably be, "That although they professed the Jewish religion, and abominated idolatry in their hearts; yet, to humour the Romans, and make themselves easy with their governors, it was not unlawful to comply sometimes with their demands, and, at least outwardly, to become occasional conformists." This is the leaven of the Herodians which our Saviour cautions his disciples against; but it was not of long continuance in the Jewish church. For Herod Antipas (e), having lost his credit at Rome, and being deposed and banished out of Judea, the sect that was instituted by his father, and supported by his favour and countenance, could not support itself after his disgrace.

Another sect, mentioned by Josephus (f) as rising after this time, was that of Judas of Galilee: For when Archelaus, son of Herod the Great, was sent into banishment, and Judea reduced to a Roman province, Judas †, a native of Galamala, took occasion from some new exactions to exhort his countrymen to shake off the Roman yoke; pretending, that to pay tribute to any foreign power was a shameful badge of their slavery. An aversion to the Roman dominion, and an hatred of the publicans (who had the care of receiving the taxes and tributes) was natural enough to all the Jews; but they, whose zeal led them to join Judas, and form a particular sect, valued themselves upon their holiness and justice, because they would not acknowledge any other Sovereign but God; and, rather than submit to the dominion of man, or give him the title of Lord, they chose to subject themselves to any torments, or even to death itself. Judas indeed "perished, and all, as many as obeyed him, were dispersed for a while;" but in the time of the Jewish wars, they gathered again, and soon became a faction strong and considerable enough to put every thing into confusion. They affected the title of zealots (says (g) Josephus) as if their undertakings had been good and honourable, even while they outdid the very worst of men in wickedness. They looked upon themselves indeed as the true successors of Phinehas, (h) who, out of zeal for the honour of God, did immediate execution upon Zimri and Cosbi, for which he received the Divine thanks

(a) Mark viii. 15.
lib. xv. c. 12.

(f) Joseph. Antiq. lib. xviii.

(g) De Bello Jud. lib. iv.

(b) Prideaux's Connection, Anno 107.

(d) Deut. xvii. 15.

† Augustus furnished him with a plausible pretence for it, by issuing out his edict to have the whole province of Syria new surveyed and taxed about this time.

(h) Numb. xxv. 13.

(c) Joseph. Antiq.

(e) Basnage's History, lib. ii. c. 14.

and approbation. And, in imitation of him, these men took upon them to execute judgment upon such as they called notorious offenders, without staying for the ordinary formalities of law. And therefore they made no scruple of robbing, and plundering, and killing the principal of the nobility, under pretence of their holding correspondence with the Romans, and betraying the liberty of their country. At last, joining with the Idumæans, they committed all manner of outrage, seized on the temple, and profaned the sanctuary, and slew many of the high priests themselves. So that when Jerusalem came to be besieged, they were perpetually raising tumults and distractions within, which ended at last in the destruction of their city and temple, and the total dissolution of their state.

From 1 Macc.
v. 1. 2 Macc.
x. 11. and
Jos. lib. xii.
c. 14. to the
end of 1 and
2 Macc. and
of Jos. lib.
xiii. c. 19.

These were the several sects which, much about this period of time, sprang up in the Jewish church; and if the like differences in opinion have since appeared in the Christian, it is no more than what the Spirit of God has foretold: (a) "For there must be heresies among you, that they who are approved may be made manifest among you."

CHAPTER V.

FROM THE DEATH OF JOHN HYRCANUS TO THE BIRTH OF JESUS CHRIST.

THE HISTORY.

HYRCANUS, when he died, left five sons: Aristobulus, Antigonus, and Alexander, were the three first: who the fourth was, we no where read; but the name of the fifth was Absalom. Aristobulus, as eldest, succeeded his father, both in the pontificate and principality of the nation, and, as we said before, was the first in Judea, since the Babylonish captivity, who put on a diadem, and assumed the title of a king; but he was a man of a bloody and suspicious disposition. His own mother, because in virtue of his father's will she claimed some share in the sovereignty, he first cast into prison, and there starved to death. All his brothers he put under the like confinement except Antigonus, who was his great favourite, and at first shared in the government with him; but he soon cooled in his affections, and at last had him put to death; though in this piece of cruelty the instruments about him were more to blame than he.

From Joseph.
lib. xiii. c. 19.
to the end of
lib. xv.

As soon as he was settled in the throne he engaged in a war with the Ituræans†;

(a) 1 Cor. xi. 19.

† Ituræa, the country where these people dwelt, was part of Cœlo Syria, bordering upon the north-east part of the land of Israel, and lying between the inheritance of the half tribe of Manasseh, beyond

Jordan, and the territories of Damascus. It is the same country that is sometimes called Auranitis, and had its name from Itur, one of the sons of Ishmael, Gen. xxv. 15. who in our English version is wronglully called Jetur. *Prideaux's Connection*, Anno 107.

A. M. 3897,
&c. or 5305.
Ant. Chris.
107, &c.
or 106.

and having subdued the greatest part of them, he forced them to become proselytes to the Jewish religion, in the same manner as his father had done to the Idumæans; but returning sick from the war to Jerusalem, he left his brother behind him to finish it, which accordingly he did with success; and so returning in triumph, at a time when the feast of tabernacles was celebrating, he went directly to the temple (as did the guards that attended him) with his armour on, to pay his devotions to God.

The queen and the courtiers of her party, who envied the interest which Antigonus had with the king, were always buzzing in his ears such stories as they thought would excite his jealousy; and now they come and tell him, "That it was high time for him to look to himself; that his brother was gone into the temple in an equipage not becoming a private man; and that, in all probability, it would not be long before he could come with a troop of his armed soldiers, and execute his wicked design against him."

This representation made some impression upon Aristobulus, so that he sent to his brother to put off his armour, and immediately come to him; concluding, that if, pursuant to his orders, he came unarmed, there was no mischief intended; but that if he did otherwise, there might be something in what the queen had suggested: And therefore, placing his guards in a subterraneous passage † which led from the palace to the temple, and through which his brother was to come to the king's apartment, he ordered them, that if he came unarmed they should let him pass, but if otherwise they should instantly fall upon him and dispatch him.

The queen, knowing this, prevailed with the messenger whom Aristobulus sent to bid his brother come unarmed, to tell him, on the contrary, that the king, being informed of a very beautiful suit of armour which he had brought with him from the wars, was minded to see how it became him, and therefore desired him to come in it; which accordingly he did, suspecting no ill. When he came to the place where the guards were posted, they, seeing his armour on, executed their orders, and immediately slew him; but no sooner was the fact committed than Aristobulus severely repented it.

For the sense of the loss of a good brother brought to his remembrance the murder of his mother, and his conscience flew in his face for both at once. The anxiety of his mind increased the distemper of his body; so that, finding no ease for the one, and no cure for the other, in the utmost agonies of guilt, and with many bitter accusations of himself, he gave up the ghost, †² and, after a reign of no more than one year, was succeeded by his brother Alexander Jannæus.

Ever since his father's death, he had been kept in prison by the late king; but upon his decease, his widow Salome released him and his other two brothers from their confinement; so that, being now on the throne, and having discovered that the elder of these brothers had formed a design to supplant him, he caused him to be put to death;

† When Hyrcanus built the palace of Baris, he caused this passage, which led from thence to the temple, to be made, that upon all occasions he might have a ready communication with it: And as over this passage there was a turret, or tower of the palace, called Straton's tower, Josephus tells us a very remarkable story concerning it, viz. That one Judas, an Essene, having foretold that Antigonus should that very day be slain in Straton's tower, which he took to be a town so called lying on the sea coast, and two days journey from Jerusalem; and seeing Antigonus come into the temple, he fell into a great passion, and began to exclaim against truth itself, as supposing his prediction impossible now to be fulfilled; but while he was in this agony, news being brought, that Antigonus was slain in that part of the subterraneous gallery which was directly under the turret

called Straton's tower, the Essene rejoiced in the comfort and satisfaction of having his prophecy verified, at the same time that every one else was lamenting the murder of this young prince. *Jewish Antiq.* lib. xii. c. 19.

†² Aristobulus was a great favourer of the Greeks, for which reason he was called Philellen, and the Greeks indeed had an equal favour for him: For, as Josephus tells out of Strabo, one of their historians has left this character of him:—"That he was a prince of equity, and had in many things been very beneficial to the Jews, in that he had augmented their territories, and ingrafted into the Jewish state part of the nation of the Ituræans; but the actions of his short reign shew him to have been a man of a quite different disposition. *Prideaux's Connection*, Anno 106.

but the other, who was called Absalom, desiring to live quietly, and in a private condition, he took into his favour and under his protection.

From Joseph.
lib. xiii. c. 19.
to the end of
lib. xv.

As soon as he had settled his matters at home, he led forth his forces to make war with the people of Ptolemais; and, having vanquished them in a pitched battle, shut them up in the city, and laid close siege to it. This place, and Gaza, together with the tower of Straton, and the fortress of Dura which Zoilus possessed, were the only places on the coast which were not under Alexander's dominion; and therefore, dividing his forces, with one part he besieged Ptolemais, and employed the other in ravaging the territories of Zoilus and those of Gaza. In the mean time the besieged had sent to Ptolemy Lathyrus, * the expelled king of Egypt, who reigned then in Cyprus, to come to their relief; but afterwards, bethinking themselves better, they came to a resolution (which they communicated to Ptolemy) to trust to their own strength rather than admit of any auxiliaries.

Ptolemy however was already set to sea when he heard this news; and therefore, proceeding in his voyage, and landing his army in Phœnicia, he advanced towards Ptolemais: But the people in the town would neither receive his messengers, nor send him any answer, so that he was in no small perplexity what course to take, when Zoilus and the Gazeans sent ambassadors, desiring his assistance against Alexander's forces, which they were not able to oppose.

Ptolemy, being very glad of any opportunity to make an honourable retreat from before Ptolemais, readily marched his army to their relief; but Alexander, not thinking it advisable to hazard an engagement with him, withdrew his army into their quarters, and there thought to gain by policy what he could not attain by force.

To this purpose he entered into a treaty with Lathyrus, and engaged to pay him four hundred talents of silver, on condition that he would deliver Zoilus and his territories into his hands, which Lathyrus agreed to do, and accordingly had got Zoilus into his custody; but when he came to understand that at the same time Alexander was clandestinely treating with Cleopatra, to bring her upon him with all her forces, he, detesting such double dealing, broke off all friendship with him, and resolved to do him what mischief he could.

The two armies therefore met the next year, and a very fierce battle ensued near Asophus, not far from the river Jordan; wherein Alexander being vanquished lost thirty thousand of his men, besides those that were taken prisoners. After this victory Ptolemy made every where great havock, and spread the terror *² of his name throughout all the province; but his mother Cleopatra being fearful lest so much success should make him powerful enough to invade Egypt, set out with a large fleet and a numerous army, which she landed in Phœnicia, and thence proceeded to Ptolemais, expecting that the people would have opened their gates to her; but finding the contrary, she invest-

* This Ptolemy Lathyrus, by his mother Cleopatra was made king of Egypt, but, by his affecting to reign without her, he so far incurred her displeasure, that she procured his expulsion by this artifice.—Some of her favourite eunuchs she caused to be wounded; and then bringing them out into the public assembly of the Alexandrians, she there pretended that they had suffered this from Lathyrus, in defence of her person against him, and thereupon accused him of having made an attempt upon her life; and by this means she so far incensed the people, that they rose in a general uproar against him, and would have torn him in pieces had he not fled for his life. Hereupon Cleopatra sent for Alexander, her younger son, who for some time had reigned in Cyprus, and, having made him king of Egypt, forced Lathyrus to be content

with Cyprus, upon his brother's leaving it. *Justin*, lib. xxxix. c. 4.

*² There is a very cruel and barbarous act which he is said to have done at this time, viz. that, coming with his army, in the evening after the victory, to take up his quarters in the adjoining villages, and finding them full of women and children, he caused them to be all slaughtered, and their bodies to be cut in pieces, and put in caldrons over the fire to be boiled, as if they had been for supper; that so he might leave an opinion in that country, that his men fed upon human flesh, and thereby create the greater dread and terror of his army. This barbarous cruelty Strabo and Nicholaus (as Josephus tells us) make mention of. *Jewish Antiq.* lib. xiii. c. 21.

A. M. 3897,
&c. or 5305.
Ant. Chris.
107, &c.
or 106.

ed the place to take it by force ; while Ptolemy, believing that it would be easy for him to recover Egypt in the absence of his mother and her army, left Syria and went upon that expedition ; but, meeting with more opposition than he expected, he was obliged to return to Gaza, where he passed the winter, and from thence went back again to Cyprus.

As soon as Cleopatra had taken Ptolemais, Alexander went thither with considerable presents, and was kindly received as an unhappy prince, who was Ptolemy's enemy, and had no other refuge but the queen's protection : and therefore, when some about her suggested that now she had an opportunity to seize on him and his dominions, Ananias, one of her generals, who by birth was a Jew, and by descent a relation to Alexander, by representing to her the danger and injustice of such a procedure ; how base and injurious to her own honour, which for no considerations whatever ought to be tarnished ; how prejudicial to her interest, by provoking all the Jews in the world against her ; and how contrary to the rules of faith and common honesty, which are observed among all mankind, it would be to treat a friend and ally in this manner ; he prevailed with her to desist from all thoughts of it ; so that having concluded an amicable alliance with Alexander, she returned with her army into Egypt.

As soon as the country was clear of these foreigners, and Alexander had recruited his shattered forces, he marched into Cœlo-Syria, where (after a siege of ten months) he took Gadara, and after that the strong fortress of Amathus, where Theodorus, the son of Zeno, prince of Philadelphia, had laid up all his treasure ; but Theodorus, falling suddenly upon him as he was returning from the conquest, not only recovered his treasure again, but slew ten thousand of his men, and took all his baggage from him.

All these misfortunes however did not discourage this prince. The next year he marched his forces again over the Jordan ; and, after having taken some neighbouring places, came and sat down before Gaza, with a design, if he took it, to use the people with the utmost severity ; but Apollodotus, who commanded the town, made a gallant defence, and, in a sally with twenty thousand of his men one night, fell so furiously upon Alexander's camp, that he had like to have ruined him and his whole army ; but, as soon as the day appeared, the Jews, discovering who they were, (for they thought in the dark that Lathyrus was come again to the assistance of Gaza) rallied again, and repulsed the Gazeans into the city, with the loss of a thousand of their men.

The city however still held out, till Lysimachus, envying the credit and esteem which his brother Apollodotus had gained in the defence of the place, treacherously slew him, and then as treacherously delivered up the city to Alexander ; who, as soon as he had got possession of it, let loose his soldiers upon it, with a full licence to kill, plunder, and destroy, which produced a sad scene of barbarity. The Gazeans, thus finding that they were to have no quarter, stood upon their defence, and sold their lives at so dear a rate, that, in the carnage and saccage of the place, Alexander lost as many men of his own as he killed of the enemy ; but had the horrid pleasure, before he went away, to see this ancient and famous city reduced to utter ruin and desolation.

When he returned to Jerusalem he was far from finding matters there in any peaceable posture. For, in the feast of tabernacles, while he was offering the usual sacrifices as high priest, the people, who were assembled in the temple, had the insolence to pelt him with citrons, (for during this festival it was a custom among the Jews to carry † branches of palm-trees and lemon-trees in their hands) and to give him very

† The word in the original is *Altrog*, which the Jews imagine to have been the forbidden fruit that our first parents ate in paradise. It very much resembles a citron or lemon, except that it has a very rough and uneven rind, which they fondly imagine was originally occasioned by Eve's impressing her

teeth on it, and that these marks it has still retained. The custom of carrying these in their hands is in testimony of their joy, but on the seventh day, which closes the festival, they break their branches, and throw them away ; and therefore it is supposed, that it was on this day when the mutinous multitude pelted

opprobrious language, telling him that he was a slave †, and unworthy to go up to the holy altar to offer solemn sacrifices; which enraged him to such a degree, that he fell upon them with his soldiers, and slew six thousand of them. After this he surrounded the court of the priests, wherein the altar and the temple stood, with a wooden partition, to hinder the people from coming near him while he was officiating, and, to secure his person against all future attempts, he took guards into his pay from Pisidia and Cilicia, (for he durst not trust his own countrymen) and of these he had six thousand always about him.

From Joseph.
lib. xiii. c. 19.
to the end of
lib. xv.

Having thus, in some measure, laid the storm at home, he marched his forces against the Moabites and Ammonites, and made them become tributary to him. He attacked again the fortress of Amathus; but Theodorus, not daring to stand his coming, had removed his treasure and withdrawn the garrison, so that he took it without opposition: But in his war with Thedas, an Arabian king, he had not the like success; for, falling into an ambuscade which that prince had laid for him near Gadara, he there lost most of his army, and not without some difficulty escaped himself.

This loss, added to the hatred which the Jews had conceived against him, made them fly out into an open rebellion; so that here a civil war commenced which lasted for six years. In most encounters he had the advantage of his subjects, but so exasperated were they against him, that he could never bring them to submit: For having one day asked them what they would have him do to please them, they all with one voice replied, "That he should cut his own throat; for upon no other terms would they be at peace with him; and well it were, they said, considering the great †² mischiefs he had done them, if they could be reconciled to him even after he was in his grave;" and thereupon they sent deputies to Demetrius Euchærus, who was then king of Damascus, to desire succours from him against their sovereign.

Demetrius, at their request, came into Judea with an army of three thousand horse and forty thousand foot, Syrians and Jews. Alexander marched against him with six thousand Greek mercenaries and twenty thousand Jews, who continued faithful to him; but in the engagement he was quite vanquished. All his foreign troops were lost to a man; and the greatest part of his other forces was so miserably broken, that he was forced to flee for shelter to the mountains with the poor remnant he could get together.

This misfortune, which, in all appearance, must have totally ruined his affairs, proved the very means of re-establishing them. Six thousand of those very Jews who had so lately appeared in arms against him, when they saw him reduced to this distressed condition, were moved with compassion, and went over to him: And Demetrius being content with the first advantage he had gained, or fearing perhaps that the rest of the Jews would do the same, retired into Syria, leaving the rebels to make war against their king with their own forces.

In most of the conflicts that happened between them Alexander defeated them, but still he could bring them to no terms of peace; till at last, coming to a decisive battle, he cut off the major part of them, and the rest he shut up in a place called Bethome. This he besieged and took; and having carried eight hundred of the rebels prisoners to

the high priest with these attrogs, which at this time were very common in Palestine. *Universal History*, lib. ii. c. 11.

† In this they alluded to what Eleazar, a leading Pharisee, had said to his father Hyrcanus, viz. That his mother was a captive taken in the wars, and he, consequently, disqualified to be their high priest. Vide page 631. of this vol. But the true reason of their exasperation against him was, that he followed his father's steps, and not only gave countenance to the contrary sect, but continued the penal laws against those

who should observe the traditions and customs introduced by the Pharisees. *Universal History*, lib. ii. c. 11.

†² The fourth book of the Maccabees (chap. xxix.) tells us, that this war was chiefly between the Pharisees and Sadducees, and that Alexander, having declared himself against the former, had put fifty thousand of them to death within the space of six years, which so exasperated the rest, that they would hearken to no accommodation. *Universal History*, lib. ii. c. 11.

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&c. or 5305.
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107, &c.
or 106

Jerusalem, he there caused them to be crucified all on one day, and their wives and children to be slain before their faces as they were hanging on the crosses, whilst he made an entertainment for his wives and concubines near the place where this scene of terror was acting, with an intent chiefly to feast himself and them with this horrid sight. This was a savage and unheard-of cruelty: And upon this occasion the people of his own party called him Thracides, i. e. "as cruel as a Thracian," as no name indeed could be bad enough to express so inhuman a procedure.

After these civil wars were ended, Alexander led his army against the two kings of Damascus, Antiochus first, and afterwards Aretas †, who at different times had invaded his kingdom. He took several strong places in the neighbouring territories, and after an expedition of three years continuance, returned to Jerusalem, and was well received by his subjects. But that felicity he did not long enjoy; for having at a certain time drank to a great excess, he thereupon fell sick, and was afterwards seized with a quartan ague, which he was never able to shake off. This however did not interrupt his military undertakings, till, being quite exhausted, he was forced to submit to fate while he was besieging the castle of Ragaba in the country of the Gerasens. His queen Alexandra, who was with him at the siege, observing him to draw near his end, was exceedingly troubled at the ill state wherein she and her children should be left at his death. She knew how much he had exasperated the Pharisees, then a powerful sect among the Jews, and how great hatred the generality of the people, at their instigation, had contracted against them; and therefore she saw nothing else but that she and her family would be given up to destruction, and made victims to the public rage; and thus she sat by his bed-side, lamenting and bemoaning herself while he lay a-dying.

To ease her mind from these dismal apprehensions, the advice which he gave her was this,—(a) "That she should conceal his death till the castle was taken, and then, carrying his dead body with her, should lead back the army in triumph for this success; that as soon as she was come to Jerusalem, she should send for some of the leading men of the sect of the Pharisees, lay his dead corps before them, and tell them, that she resigned it wholly to their pleasure, either to treat it with indignity (as his treatment of them had deserved), or to dispose of it as they thought fit; and withal, that she should not forget to assure them, that as her husband had made her regent during her childrens minority, she would do nothing in the administration without their advice and participation."

After the reduction of Ragaba, Alexandra returned to Jerusalem in the manner that was prescribed, and in every thing else observed her husband's directions most punctually; which succeeded so well, that the usual invectives against him were changed into encomiums. All deplored the loss of so valiant a prince, and honoured his funeral with a more than ordinary pomp and solemnity; all pitied the queen-dowager, and, in obedience to her husband's will, settled her in the supreme government of the nation.

A. M. 3897,
&c. or 5333.
Ant. Chris.
107, &c.
or 78.

Alexander, when he died, left behind him two sons, Hyrcanus and Aristobulus, but the regency he invested in the queen, who had indeed the name of the government, but the administration was entirely in the power of the Pharisees. The first thing therefore that they did, was to have the decree of John Hyrcanus against their traditionary constitutions abolished; next, to release all the prisoners, and recall all the exiles that were concerned with them in the late civil wars; and then to demand justice against all those by whose instigation and advice the eight hundred rebels above-mentioned had been crucified.

To this purpose they exhibited articles against one Diogenes, a noted confident of

† This Aretas was king of Arabia Petraea, but, upon the death of Antiochus, was chosen king of Damascus likewise.
(a) *Joseph. Antiq. lib. xiii. c. 23.*

the late king's; had him condemned and executed; and proceeded in like manner against several others: so that the late king's friends and adherents, seeing no end of these persecutions, went at length to the queen in a body, with Aristobulus her younger son at the head of them, to remonstrate against these proceedings. They had been old officers to the king, and had faithfully adhered to him in all his wars and difficulties; and therefore they requested, that if no regard were to be had to their services, they might at least be permitted to depart the land and seek their safety elsewhere, or else, to be out of the reach of their enemies, might be sent into the several garrisons of the kingdom. And to this last demand of theirs the queen consented.

In the mean time news was brought to Jerusalem that Tigranes, king of Armenia, with an army of five hundred thousand men, had invaded Syria, and would in a short time be in Judea. This put the queen and all the Jews into a terrible fright; and therefore they immediately dispatched away ambassadors, with presents of great value, to court his friendship and divert the storm. The ambassadors found him laying close siege to Ptolemais; and when they were introduced (for he was a man * of great pride and state) he commended their forwardness in applying to him, accepted their presents, and assured them of his good inclinations: But the true reason of all this civility was, that Lucullus the Roman general, in pursuit of Mithridates, had entered Armenia, and was putting the country under military contribution, which obliged Tigranes to return home, and so delivered the Jews from the apprehensions of an invasion from that quarter.

Alexandra, when she was declared queen, made Hyrcanus high priest, and left Aristobulus to lead a private life; but a private life was not agreeable to his aspiring temper. As soon therefore as he perceived that the queen was sick and past all hopes of recovery, he privately in the night went out of Jerusalem, attended only with one servant; and having visited all the castles in which by his procurement his father's friends had been placed in garrison, in fifteen days time he secured to his interest twenty of these fortresses, and thereby in a manner made himself master of the rest of the strength of the kingdom; so that when his mother died, (which was not long after his departure from Jerusalem), though she had declared his brother Hyrcanus her successor, he nevertheless met him in the plains of Jericho: But, as the two armies were going to engage, most of the forces of Hyrcanus deserted and went over to Aristobulus, which obliged Hyrcanus to come to a treaty with his brother; in which it was agreed, that he should make a resignation of the crown and high priesthood to Aristobulus, and submit to live quietly upon his own private fortune, which accordingly was ratified by public sanction.

Hyrcanus was a quiet and peaceable man, a lover of retirement and ease, and therefore his resignation of the crown was not so great a grievance to him as it was to some about him. Among these Antipater †, the father of Herod, surnamed the Great,

* This vain man assumed to himself the title of King of Kings; and, to make his claim to it the better appear, having taken several petty princes prisoners in his wars with them, he made them wait on him as his domestic servants. He never went abroad but he had four of them to attend him; two running by him on one side of his horse, and two on the other; and thus, in like manner, he was served by some of them at his table, in his bed-chamber, and on all other occasions, but more especially when he gave audience to ambassadors; for then, to make the greater ostentation of his glory to foreign nations, he made all these captive kings, in the posture and habit of servants, to range themselves on each side of him. But,

as proud as he was, when once he came to feel the power of the Roman arms, he was soon brought into such a state of mean and abject humiliation, that, when he appeared before Pompey, he plucked his crown or royal tiara from off his head, and cast himself prostrate on the ground before him. *Plutarch* in *Lucullo et Pompeio*.

† Eusebius and Julius Africanus tell us, that the father of this Antipater was an heathen, and an inhabitant of Ascalon; that a company of robbers having pillaged a temple near Ascalon, took this young Antipater, the father of Herod the Great, who, at that time, was the priest of the temple, away with them; and that his father being not able to redeem him,

From Joseph.
lib. xii. c. 19.
to the end of
lib. xv.

A. M. 3935,
&c. or 5342.
Ant. Chris.
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was the chief: who, having persuaded Hyrcanus that while he continued in Judea his life was in danger, and that he had no other choice left but either to reign or die, advised him to make his escape to Aretas king of Arabia, and with him to stipulate for forces for the recovery of his kingdom. Hyrcanus did so; and upon condition that he would restore the towns, which his father Alexander had taken from him, Aretas supplied him with fifty thousand men, who, being joined with the Jews that were of Hyrcanus's party, gave battle to Aristobulus, and having obtained a complete victory, pursued him to Jerusalem, and thence to the mount of the temple, where they besieged him, and committed some outrageous acts *. In the mean time Scaurus, one of Pompey's lieutenants, being come with a Roman army as far as Damascus, Aristobulus took care, with the promise of four hundred talents, to engage him on his side; so that he sent to Aretas to withdraw his forces from Jerusalem, and threatened him with the Roman arms in case of refusal. Hereupon Aretas was forced to raise the siege, and march off: But in his retreat Aristobulus fell upon his rear, and destroyed about seven thousand of his men.

Not long after this Pompey himself came into Syria, and took up his residence at Damascus, where he was attended by ambassadors from several nations, and among the rest Hyrcanus and Aristobulus sent their deputies, desiring both his protection and determination of the controversy depending between them. But when Pompey had heard what they both had to say, he ordered that the two brothers should appear in person before him, that so he might be better able to enquire into the merits of the cause, and determine it in such a manner as justice should direct.

The two brothers accordingly waited upon Pompey to receive his decision; and, at the same time, several chief men of the Jews came to remonstrate against them both. The Jews pleaded, "That it had been formerly the usage of their nation to be governed by the high priest of the God whom they worshipped, who, without assuming any other title, administered justice to them, according to the laws and constitutions transmitted down to them from their forefathers. They owned indeed, that the two contending brothers were of the sacerdotal race; but then they alleged that they had changed the old, and introduced a new form of government, in order to enslave the people, and thereupon they prayed that they might not be governed by a king."

Hyrcanus on his part urged, "That, being the elder brother, he was unjustly depri-

they carried him into Idumæa, where he settled and made his fortune. But there is much more probability that what Josephus, in the history of the Jewish wars, lib. i. c. 5. tells us of this great man may be true, viz. that he was the son of another Antipater, who was made governor of Idumæa by Alexander Jannæus; and as to his religion, there is no question to be made but that he was a Jew and circumcised; because the Idumæans had long before received circumcision and the religion of the Jews, even when Hyrcanus made a conquest of their country. This Antipater having had his education in the court of Alexander Jannæus, and Alexandra his queen who reigned after him, had wrought himself into the good graces of Hyrcanus, the eldest of their sons, in hopes to rise by his favour, when he should come to the crown after his mother; but when Hyrcanus was deposed, and Aristobulus made king in his place, all the measures which he had taken for his advancement were broken; and being too obnoxious to Aristobulus ever to have any prospect of favour from him, he thought himself obliged, both in his own interest and defence, to act the part we find he did. *Calmet's*

Dictionary under the word, and *Prideaux's* Connection, Anno 65.

* One barbarous action of this kind is thus related by Josephus.—At this time there was at Jerusalem one Onias, a man of great reputation for the sanctity of his life, and who, by his prayers, had been thought to have once obtained rain from heaven in an extremity of drought. Upon a fond imagination therefore, that his curses would be as prevalent as his prayers, the besiegers brought him into the camp, and there pressed him to curse Aristobulus, and all that were with him. He opposed their request as long as he could; but at length finding no rest from their importunities, he lifted up his hands to heaven, and, as he was standing in the midst of them, said, "O Lord God, Ruler of the Universe, since both we, that stand here before thee, are thy people, and they that are besieged in the temple are thy priests, I humbly beseech thee not to hear the prayers of either of them against the other." Whereupon they who brought him thither were so enraged against the good man, that they fell upon him and stoned him to death. *Jewish Antiq.* lib. xiv. c. 3.

ved of his birthright by Aristobulus, who, leaving him only a small portion of land for his subsistence, had usurped all the rest, and, as a man born for mischief, practised piracy at sea, and rapine and depredation at land, upon his 'neighbours." And for the attestation of all this there appeared above a thousand of the principal Jews. What Aristobulus had to say, in answer to this, was, "That Hyrcanus was superseded in the government by reason of his incapacity to rule, and not through any ambition of his; that his sloth and inactivity had brought upon him the contempt of the people; and that therefore he was forced to interpose, merely to preserve the government from falling into other hands." And, to witness the truth of this, he produced several young gentlemen of the nation, who, by the gaudiness of their dress, and the levity of their carriage, did no great credit to the cause which they pretended to support.

From Joseph.
lib. xiii. c. 19.
to the end of
lib. xv.

Upon this hearing, Pompey could not but perceive the injury which Aristobulus had done his brother; but for the present he dismissed them with fair words, and referred the full determination of the matter until himself should come to Jerusalem, which he would not fail to do as soon as he had finished the Arabian war. Upon the whole, Aristobulus perceiving which way Pompey's discourse and inclinations tended, left Damascus without ever taking leave, and returning to Judea, there armed the country in his defence. Pompey had soon done his business in Arabia, and thence coming to Judea, found that, upon his approach, Aristobulus had shut himself up in the castle of Alexandrion, which was a strong fortress built by his father (and therefore called by this name) on an high mountain, that stood in the entrance of the country of Judea, towards the Samaritan side. Hither Pompey marched his army; and having encamped before it, sent a messenger to Aristobulus to come down to him. Aristobulus, though with much reluctance, was forced to comply; and when Pompey demanded of him to deliver up his castles, and to sign orders to that purpose to all who commanded in them, he durst not refuse doing it, though he complained of the force that was put on him, and, as soon as he got out of Pompey's hands, fled to Jerusalem, and there prepared for war.

Pompey was not long before he marched after him; but when he drew near to Jerusalem, Aristobulus, † repenting of what he had done, went out to him, and, endeavouring to reconcile matters with him, promised an entire submission for the future, and a considerable sum of money besides, if he would but withdraw his forces. Pompey accepted the proposal; and accordingly sent Gabinius, one of his lieutenants, with a body of men to receive the money; but when he came to Jerusalem, he found the gates shut against him, and was told from the walls, that those within would stand to no such agreement.

This was such treatment, that the Roman general, without any more to do, clapped Aristobulus (whom he had taken with him) in chains, and so marching forward with his whole army, was, by the prevalence of Hyrcanus's party, received into Jerusalem; but the other faction retiring to the mount of the temple, broke down the bridges over the deep ditches and valleys that surrounded it, and so resolved to defend the place: But there was no withstanding a Roman army long. In three months time Pompey ‡

† The fourth book of Maccabees (chap. xxxvi.) says nothing of this submission of Aristobulus to the Roman general, but tells us, that Pompey marched directly against Jerusalem, where, observing the situation of the place, the strength of its walls, towers, &c. he resolved to try to gain Aristobulus by fair means; that he invited him to come into his camp, and promised him all the safety that he could desire; that accordingly he came to him, and engaged to deliver up all the treasure of the temple if he would but declare for him; but that the priests having refused

to ratify the king's promise, this made the general lay siege to the temple. *Universal History*, lib. ii. c. 11.

‡ It is supposed by Josephus that the mount of the temple would have hardly been taken so soon by the Romans, had it not been for the superstition of the Jews in their observation of the Sabbath. For though they now held it lawful to defend themselves vigorously on that day, yet they would not stir an hand to annoy the enemy, or obstruct them in any of their works. This Pompey observing, ordered his men to

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became master of the mount, which he carried sword in hand; and, having made a dreadful carnage upon this occasion, he caused afterwards all such prisoners † to be put to death as were found to have been the principal incendiaries of this war.

Before he left Jerusalem, he, with several other chief officers accompanying him, went into the temple, and caused the most sacred parts of it, even the holy of holies (into which himself entered), to be opened. He visited the treasures likewise, where he found two thousand talents of silver, besides vessels, and other things of great value; but touching nothing of all this, he left it entire for the sacred uses to which it was appropriated. He thought it advisable, however, to destroy the walls of Jerusalem; and though he restored Hyrcanus to the high priesthood, and made him prince of the country, yet he deprived him of all the new conquests which his predecessors had made; would not permit him to wear a diadem; and obliged him to pay an annual tribute to the Romans: and having thus regulated all matters, he set forward on his journey home, carrying with him Aristobulus, his two sons, Alexander and Antigonus, and two of his daughters, as captives, to be led before him in his triumph.

Alexander, by the way, found means to make his escape; and after three years returning into Judea, gathered forces, and possessed himself of several places; but Gabinius, the Roman governor in Syria, defeated him in all his attempts, and then coming to Jerusalem, confirmed Hyrcanus in the priesthood, but the civil administration ‡ he took from the Sanhedrim, and put into the hands of such magistrates as himself made choice of; and having divided the whole land into five provinces, appointed a court of justice (with power ultimately to determine every thing, over each of them. Aristobulus, late king of Judea, after he had been five years a prisoner at Rome, having with

employ the Sabbath-day in nothing else but in making their approaches, wherein the besieged giving them no molestation, their engines of battery were brought forward, and without opposition placed just as they pleased; and so being fitted and raised to advantage, soon made a breach in the wall large enough for an assault. *Josephus de Bello Jud. lib. i. c. 5.*

† Among these it is supposed that Absalom, a younger son of the famous John Hyrcanus, suffered. He had lived a private life, without meddling with public affairs, under the protection of his brother Alexander Jannæus: But having unhappily married his daughter to his nephew Aristobulus, he was, by that means, drawn into his son-in-law's party, and being taken prisoner, in all probability was put to death; because from that time we find no farther mention made of him. *Joseph. Antiq. lib. xiv. c. 8. and Universal History.*

* But though Pompey was thus modest, yet Crassus soon after coming that way, not only extorted the two thousand talents, and a large bar of gold, by way of bribe, to restrain him from farther plunder; but, contrary to the promise which he had given upon oath, ransacked the temple all over, and robbed it of every thing that he thought worth taking away, insomuch, that the whole of his sacrilegious plunder amounted to the value of ten thousand talents, which is above two millions of our money. *Joseph Antiq. lib. xiv. c. 12. et de Bello, lib. c. 6.*

‡ Before this, the government had been managed under the prince by two sorts of councils, or courts of justice; one consisting of twenty three persons, called the lesser Sanhedrim; and the other of seventy-

two, called the greater Sanhedrim. Of the first sort there was one in every city; only in Jerusalem (because of the greatness of the place) there were two, which sat apart from each other in two distinct rooms. Of the latter sort, there was only one in the whole land. The lesser Sanhedrim dispatched all affairs of justice arising within the respective cities where they sat, and the precincts belonging to them. The great Sanhedrim presided over the affairs of the whole nation, received appeals from the lesser Sanhedrims, interpreted the laws, and by new institutions from time to time regulated the execution of them. All this Gabinius abolished; and instead thereof, erected five courts or Sanhedrims, and invested them all with sovereign power, independent on each other. The first of them he placed at Jerusalem, the second at Jericho, the third at Gadara, the fourth at Amathus, and the fifth at Sepphoris; and having, under these five cities, divided the land into five provinces, he ordered the inhabitants of each to repair to the court which he had there erected, and from which there was no appeal, except it was to Rome. Besides the two sorts of Sanhedrims above mentioned, there was a third court among the Jews, which was not affected by any of these alterations, and that was the court of three, instituted for the deciding all controversies about bargains, sales, contracts, and all other such matters of common right between man and man. In all which cases, one of the litigants chose one judge and the other another, and these two chose a third, which three constituted a court to hear, and ultimately determine the matter in contest. *Talmud in Sanhedrim, Light-foot's Prospect of the Temple, chap. 20. and 22. and Joseph. Antiq. lib. xiv. c. 10.*

his son Antigonus made his escape, returned into Judea, and with some few forces which he had got together was endeavouring to raise fresh troubles. But Gabinius came upon him before he was prepared to make a sufficient resistance; and having taken him and his son prisoners, sent them both again to Rome, where his father was kept in durance; but his children, upon the intercession of Gabinius, were immediately sent back to Judea.

From Joseph.
lib. xiii. c. 19.
to the end of
lib. xv.

Not long after this, the difference between Cæsar and Pompey occasioned a distraction in the Roman affairs, and a general contention all the empire over. Pompey had left some forces in Syria; and Cæsar, to oppose against these, had set Aristobulus at liberty, and proposed to have sent him with two legions into Judea in order to secure that province: but before he could get out of Rome, he was poisoned by some of Pompey's party, and his body remained a long time there embalmed in honey, till M. Anthony procured it to be carried into Judea, where it was honourably interred in the royal sepulchre.

When Cæsar returned from the Alexandrian war, Antigonus, the second son of Aristobulus (for Scipio, by Pompey's order, had caused his elder brother's head to be struck off at Antioch) met him in Syria, and having complained of the hard fate which his father and brother had met with, he charged Hyrcanus and Antipater with having possessed themselves of the government by force; but Antipater, who was then with Cæsar, defended his own and Hyrcanus's cause so very well, that Cæsar, instead of restoring Antigonus, as he desired, made it a † decree, that Hyrcanus should hold the office of high priest at Jerusalem, and the principality of Judea with it, to him and those of his family in a perpetual succession, (by which he restored the government to its ancient form, and abolished the aristocracy which Gabinius had instituted), and that Antipater should be the procurator of Judea under him.

This Antipater, who was a person of great wisdom, of powerful interest in several places, and in high favour with the Romans, had two sons, Phasael and Herod; to the former of which he gave the government of the country about Jerusalem, and to the other that of Galilee. Phasael behaved himself in his administration with great lenity; but Herod was a man of a different character, and his boisterous temper made him less acceptable to the Jews.

At this time there was a gang of thieves that infested Galilee, and the neighbouring parts of Cælo-Syria, whom Herod fell upon, and having taken one Hezekiah their ring-leader, with several of his associates, put them all to death. Those who envied the prosperity of Antipater, and the growth and greatness of his power, made this an handle to accuse Herod to Hyrcanus for executing men without a legal trial, and obtained a citation from him to summon Herod to answer for it before the Sanhedrim. He came; but as he made his appearance in a purple robe, and surrounded with his guards, he so over-awed that great council, that they all sat silent without saying a word against him, until Simeas, a man of great justice and integrity, rose up, and with a becoming presence of mind complained, that he never saw a criminal appear in a court of

† This decree, which at once abolished the aristocracy which Gabinius had lately set up, and restored the Jewish state to its pristine sovereignty, (according to Josephus) runs in this form: "Julius Cæsar, emperor, the second time dictator, and Pontifex Maximus, &c. Forasmuch as Hyrcanus, the son of Alexander a Jew, has at all times, as well in war as peace, approved himself to be our good and trusty friend and ally, as appeareth by several attestations of unquestionable credit, &c. These services and good offices duly considered, I do hereby confirm, and establish to him and his heirs, the perpetual go-

vernment of the Jews, both as their prince and high priest, after the manner and method of their own laws; and from this day forward enrol them among the number of my trusty and well beloved friends, and ratify an affinity with them as my associates. I ordain likewise, that all the legal pontifical rights and privileges be devolved upon him and his sons for ever; and that in case any controversy shall arise among the people concerning the Jewish discipline, himself and his family, in the course of succession, shall be the only judges of it." *Antiq. lib. xiv. c. 17.*

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justice so attended; that it looked as if he meant to make the administration thereof more dangerous to the judges than the malefactor: "But this, says he, (turning to the high priest) is not so much to be imputed to his insolence as to your connivance which encourages it: yet know, continued he, that this person whom you skreen from the justice of the laws will be a scourge to you all." Nor was he in this a false prophet.

For Herod having, by the persuasion of the high priest, for fear that the sentence of the Sanhedrim should pass against him, made his escape from Jerusalem, and retired to Damascus, where Sextus Cæsar the præfect of Syria then resided, and put himself under his protection, he so far insinuated himself with him, that for a sum of money with which he presented him, he obtained the government of Cælo-Syria, where he soon raised an army, and marched it into Judea with an intent to have deposed Hyrcanus, and cut off the whole Sanhedrim for the indignity they had put upon him by their late process; but his father Antipater and his brother Phasael met him, and dissuaded him from it, so that for the present he dropped his resentment.

As long as Julius Cæsar lived the Jews were held in great honour and esteem by the Romans, and had several decrees passed in their favour: But † after his untimely death, their country became a prey to every hungry general of Rome. Cassius, having made himself master of Syria, exacted of the Jews above seven hundred talents of silver, which Antipater prevailed with his two sons to pay him, and so preserved himself the longer in the government of Judea. He was, as we said, procurator of the province under Hyrcanus, and the next man to him in power and authority was Malicus: But, not being contented to be the second man next the prince, he would fain have been the first; especially since he was a natural Jew, and Antipater but an Idumæan. Antipater had all along been his fast friend, and, upon more occasions than one saved his life: But he, like an ungrateful wretch, was continually laying plots against him; and at length, taking the opportunity * of his dining one day with Hyrcanus, he bribed the butler to give him poison in his wine, of which he died, and then, with an armed force, he seized on the government of Jerusalem. Phasael and Herod had, for a long time,

† While Julius Cæsar was preparing for an expedition against the Parthians, in order to revenge the death of Crassus and the Romans that were slain with him at the battle of Corrhæ, on the ides of March, i. e. on the fifteenth day of that month, four days before he intended to set out upon that expedition, he was murdered in the senate-house by a conspiracy of the senators. This was a most villainous act, and the more so, because the prime authors of it, viz. Marcus Brutus, Decimus Brutus, Cassius, Trebonius, and some others of them, were the very persons whom Cæsar in the highest manner had obliged; yet it was executed under the notion of an high heroic virtue, in thus freeing their country from one whom they called a tyrant; and the manner in which it was executed is this,—As soon as he came into the senate-house, Attilius Cimber, who was one of the conspirators, presented himself (according as it was agreed among them) to demand his brother's pardon, who was banished; but upon Cæsar's refusal, under pretence of begging it with greater submission, laid hold of the bottom of his robe, and pulled him so hard, that he made him bend his back: Then Casca drew his dagger, and stabbed him in the shoulder, but the wound proved but slight, so that Cæsar fell upon him; but as they were scuffling, another of the conspirators came behind, and stabbed him in the side. Cassius, at the same time, wounded him in the face, and Bru-

tus pierced his thigh. With much courage he still defended himself; but the blood he lost through so many wounds having much weakened him, he went to the foot of Pompey's statue, where he fell and expired, after having been stabbed in three and twenty places, by the hands of those whom he thought he had disarmed by his good offices. *Prideaux's Connection*, Anno 44. and *Vertot's Revolutions of Rome*, c. 13.

* The matter was conducted thus,—Cassius being informed by Herod of the manner of his father's death, gave him leave to revenge himself on the murderer, and sent his orders to the forces, under his command at Tyre, to be assistant to him therein. On Cassius's taking Laodicea, all the princes and chief lords of Syria and Palestine hastened thither with their presents and congratulations. Hyrcanus, together with Malicus and Herod, put himself upon the road for the same purpose; and as they drew near to Tyre, where they were to lodge that night, Herod invited all the company to sup with him; and sending his servants before, under pretence of providing the supper, by them he communicated the orders of Cassius to the commanders of the Roman garrison in the city, who accordingly sent out a party of armed men that fell upon Malicus as he drew near to the place, and slew him. *Joseph. Antiq. lib. xiv. c. 10.* and *De Bello*, lib. i. c. 9.

suspected this traitor's design against their father, and when they heard of his death, they concluded that he was the author of it. They thought proper however to conceal their resentment for the present, but as soon as Herod found a fit opportunity he had him taken off.

From Joseph.
lib. xiii. c. 19.
to the end of
lib. xv.

No sooner was the death of Malicus and the manner of it known in Jerusalem, but a party of his friends rose in arms to revenge it on the sons of Antipater; and having gained Hyrcanus, and Felix the commander of the Roman forces on their side, put the whole city in an uproar. Herod was then with Fabius, the Roman governor of Damascus, and there laid up with sickness; so that the whole storm fell upon Phasaël, which he weathered with full success: For he drove Felix and all that tumultuous party out of Jerusalem; and when his brother recovered and returned, they both together soon quelled the faction, and would doubtless have resented the high priest's behaviour upon this occasion with more severity, but that, at this time, a match was set on foot between Herod and his grand-daughter Mariamne, † which reconciled all differences. But though the faction was for the present suppressed it was not long before it revived.

After the defeat of Brutus * and Cassius by M. Anthony and Cæsar Octavianus ‡ at Philippi, Anthony, coming into Asia, was attended by the deputies of most princes and states in that part of the world, and among others with several principal persons of the Jewish nation, who were sent to accuse Phasaël and Herod of usurping the government from Hyrcanus: But partly by money, and partly by interest, Herod had so far prevailed with Anthony, that he would not so much as hear them. This, however, did not discourage the Jews that were his enemies; for when Anthony came to Daphne near Antioch, an hundred of the most considerable among them waited upon him with the like complaints. Here Anthony gave them an hearing; and when he put it to Hyrcanus, whether the two brothers or their accusers were, in his opinion, fittest to govern the state under him, he gave it for the two brothers; and Anthony, being minded to do them a farther favour, made them both tetrarchs, † and committed all

† She was the daughter of Alexander, the son of king Aristobulus, by Alexandra the daughter of Hyrcanus the Second, and therefore was grand-daughter to both these brothers. She was a lady of extraordinary beauty and great virtue, and in all other laudable qualifications accomplished beyond most of her time; but the true motive for Herod's desiring to make her his wife was, because the Jews at this time had a very zealous affection for the Asmonæan family; and therefore he thought that by marrying this lady he should the easier reconcile the hearts of the people to him. *Prideaux's Connection*, Anno 38.

* Philippi is a town of Macedonia, to the inhabitants of which St Paul wrote his epistle; but what made this place the most remarkable was the famous battle that was fought near it, between the army under Octavianus and Anthony, and that under Brutus and Cassius, consisting of near an hundred thousand men each. Brutus and Cassius both commanded in the action; but Octavianus being sick in his tent, the command of the other army fell wholly upon Anthony. The forces commanded by Cassius were soon repulsed, so that he retired to an hill, there to wait for an account of that part of the army which was commanded by Brutus; but in the confusion and dust, not being able to perceive what was doing, his mind misgave him that Brutus was overcome, and thereupon he commanded his servant Pindarus to cut off his head. Brutus, in the first day of action, was

so successful, that he made the enemy retire, and took Octavianus's camp; but in a few days after, coming to a second engagement, he was entirely routed; and being loth to fall into the enemy's hands, prevailed with his friend Strabo to dispatch him: And what is very remarkable in these two mens deaths is, that they were both killed with the same swords wherewith they had murdered Cæsar. *Plutarch, De Bruto, Valerius Paternulus*, lib. ii. c. 70. *Apion de Bellis Civilibus*, lib. iv. and *Dion Cassius*, lib. xlvii.

†² Octavianus was the son of Caius Octavius by Atia the daughter of Julia, sister of Julius Cæsar; and therefore Julius adopted him (as being his nephew and next male relation) to be his son. Upon his uncle's death, he took upon him the name of Caius Julius Cæsar Octavianus, and by this name he was afterwards known till that of Augustus, which was given after the victory at Actium, swallowed up all the rest. *Prideaux's Connection*, Anno 44.

†³ This word, which sometimes occurs in Scripture, and is pretty frequent among the descendants of Herod the Great, according to the force of the Greek, signifies a lord that has the fourth part of a state, province, or kingdom, without wearing a diadem, or bearing the title of a king: but it must not always be understood in a rigorous sense, because the name of tetrarch was given to him that possessed sometimes an half, and sometimes a third part of any principality; nay, oftentimes the name of a king was

A. M. 3935. the affairs of Judea to their administration. This he confirmed by letters to the Jews ;
 &c. or 5312, and, to oblige them to obey what he had done, he detained fifteen of the hundred as
 Ant. Chris. hostages, and would have put them to death, had not Herod saved them by his inter-
 69, &c. cession.
 or 69.

This notwithstanding, they did not still give over their solicitation ; but when Anthony came to Tyre, they sent a thousand of their principal men with the like accusations against the two brothers : But looking on this as a tumult rather than an embassy, he directed his soldiers to fall upon them, so that some of them were slain and more wounded ; and at the same time, he sent a peremptory order to the magistrates to assist Herod in the recovery of his government. With this order Herod went to Jerusalem, and would have persuaded the people to receive him, by expostulating the danger of disobeying him, and provoking the Roman general ; but instead of regarding his threats or advice they fell upon him ; and by killing some, and wounding others of his attendants, so enraged Anthony against them, that he ordered their fifteen hostages to be put to death, and threatened a severe revenge against the rest.

In the mean time Antigonus, the son of Aristobulus, having not long before attempted to possess himself of Judea, but being defeated and expelled by Herod, fled to Parthia, and was there kindly received and protected. After he had been there some time, and established an interest among the most considerable persons of that nation, he promised them a thousand talents, and five hundred of the finest women † in the country, if they would assist him in the recovery of his father's kingdom. The Parthians accepted of the proposal, and the king sent his general along with Antigonus, at the head of a powerful army, to invade Judea. As soon as they were entered the country, great numbers of the Jews joined them in their march ; and when they came to Jerusalem, the faction that hated the two brothers declared for them : So that Herod, not being able to defend the city, especially after he found that Hyrcanus and his brother Phasaël were taken by the Parthians and put in chains, made his escape by night ; and taking his mother Cypros, and his sister Salome, Mariamne his bride, and Alexandra the mother of Mariamne, with him, made the best of his way to Massada, a prodigious strong fortress, built on the top of a very high mountain near the west side of the lake Asphaltites : and having furnished it with provisions for several months, he there left his mother, and the other women of quality whom he had brought with him from Jerusalem, under the care and government of Joseph, another of his brothers, and so took his way to Petra in Arabia, hoping to procure some assistance from Malchus, who had succeeded Aretas as king of that country : But before he reached Petra, he received a message from Malchus, desiring him to depart his dominions, because he was afraid he should offend the Parthians who were his neighbours, if he should receive him.

The Parthians, when they found that Herod was gone from Jerusalem, after they had plundered the place and the country round about, made Antigonus (as they had agreed) king of Judea, and delivered to him Hyrcanus and Phasaël in chains. Phasaël, knowing that his death was determined, put a voluntary end to his life and sufferings ; for not having the liberty of his hands to dispatch himself, he beat out his brains against the wall of the prison ; and Hyrcanus (to (a) incapacitate him from being any longer high priest) had his ears cut off, and was then delivered back again to the Parthians, by them to be carried into the East, who, upon their return, left him at Seleucia.

given to him that was but a tetrarch, and that of a kingdom to a tetrarchy. *Calmet's Dictionary*, under the Word.

† The fourth book of Maccabees (chap. xlix.) says eight hundred women, the fairest, and best bred in all the country ; but Josephus adds, that Antigonus was not able to make good his contract, by rea-

son that Herod had seized on most of the fine women, and sent them away with his wife and family to Massada, a place of safe retreat, whilst himself stayed behind with his guards to cover their march, and prevent their being pursued.

(a) Levit. xxi. 18—24.

Herod having met with this unworthy treatment in Arabia, made what haste he could into Egypt; but when he came to Rinocorura, he there was informed of his brother's death, and in what manner he had effected it; from thence he went to Pelusium, and so to Alexandria, where he took ship, and after a voyage of no small danger and difficulty, landed at Brundisium, from whence he proceeded to Rome; and having acquainted M. Anthony with the miserable state of his affairs in Judea, he most earnestly prayed his aid.

From Joseph.
lib. xiii. c. 19.
to the end of
lib. xv

Anthony, remembering his friendship which he had with his father first, and afterwards with him, and being exasperated against Antigonus, whom he always looked upon as an enemy to the Roman people, and not a little affected with the promises which Herod had made of giving him a large sum of money if ever he should be reinstated; not only warmly espoused his cause himself, but engaged likewise Octavianus (who was afterwards called Augustus) so closely in his interest, that by the help and influence of these two men, the senate unanimously decreed that Herod should be king of Judea, and Antigonus declared an enemy to the commonwealth. Having, in the short space of seven days, dispatched his affairs thus prosperously, he left Rome, and landing at Ptolemais began to raise forces with a design to march against Antigonus, who, ever since his departure, had besieged the fortress of Massada. With these, and such Roman auxiliaries as he received from Ventidius, Anthony's general, and Silo his lieutenant in Palestine, he made himself master of the greatest part of the country, took Joppa, relieved Massada, and, taking the castle of Ressa in his way, marched directly to Jerusalem, and there encamped on the west side of the city. Antigonus had provided the place with all warlike munitions, and a good garrison, which, with darts and stones from the walls, and flying parties frequently making excursions, very much infested Herod's army. Herod, in hopes of making easy work of it, sent an herald about the walls to proclaim indemnity to all that would submit. Antigonus, on the contrary, directing his speech to Silo and the Romans, complained of the injustice they did him, in transferring the crown from him, who was of royal descent, to a plebeian and half Jew as Herod was; and from these, and such like reproaches on both sides, they came at length to acts of hostility, wherein Antigonus and his men behaved themselves so valiantly, that they soon drove the enemy from the walls.

Ventidius, indeed, had left Silo in Judea, to be assistant to Herod in the reduction of Jerusalem; but in his manner of managing the war (which was to get great sums from Herod to promote his interest, and greater from Antigonus to hinder it) he did him more harm than good; for he did not only take all methods to squeeze him, but encouraged his soldiers likewise to mutiny, on pretence of wanting forage and provisions, more commodious quarters, and better pay; which, when at any time Herod endeavoured to remedy, Antigonus, having notice of all that passed, with flying parties and ambuscades frequently intercepted and cut off the convoys that were designed for the united army: though Herod, who was as active and diligent as the enemy, very often came up with them, and pursued his advantage so closely, that, having with some difficulty recovered all Galilee from Antigonus, he after that betook himself to rid it of those gangs * of thieves and banditti which at that time very much infested it.

All this while the siege of Jerusalem went on but slowly; and Herod, perceiving that the Roman generals were very cool to his interest, was resolved to go again to An-

* These thieves had so sheltered themselves in the caves and holes of the mountains, that it was no easy matter to come at them, because the steepness and craginess of the mountains made it almost impossible either to scale them from below, or from above to get down to them by any passage; and therefore (to ferret them out of their dens) Herod was forced to

make certain large chests, and, filling them with soldiers, to let them down into the entrances of these caves by chains from engines which he had fixed above; by which means he either destroyed all that lurked in them, or else reduced them to terms of submission. *Joseph. Antiq. lib. xiv.*

A. M. 3935,
&c. or 5342.
Ant. Chris.
69, &c.
or 69.

thony (who was then besieging Samosata, a city upon the Euphrates) to make a representation of their behaviour. During his absence, he left his brother Joseph to command in Judea, giving strict orders to put nothing to the hazard until his return; but Joseph, forgetting this, ventured upon an expedition against Jericho, where, being circumvented by the enemy, he was slain himself, and most of his forces cut to pieces; which gave those that were disaffected to Herod, both in Galilee and Idumæa, an opportunity of revolting. Anthony, when he heard that Herod was coming, drew out his army to receive him, and, while he staid with him, shewed him all the marks of friendship and esteem: but, designing himself to go to Egypt †, he left the army with Sosius, ordering him to assist Herod upon all occasions; and he accordingly gave him two legions for the guard of his person, and marched after himself with the rest of the forces.

Upon his return from Anthony, Herod, while he was at Daphne, had an account of his brother's death and defeat, which made him hasten to Mount Lebanon, where he raised eight hundred of the natives, and with these, and the Roman forces, came to Ptolemais, and thence marching by night he passed through Galilee, subdued all that came in his way, and forced the rest into their strong holds. But while he was hastening towards Jericho with an intent to avenge his brother Joseph's death, a party of six thousand of the enemy came resolutely down the hills, and put the Romans into a great consternation, beating back the van-guard, and pursuing them home to their camp, where they so warmly engaged them, that Herod himself was wounded in the conflict: but, not long after, when Antigonus, flushed with this success, had sent Pappus his general with the main strength of his forces against him, he gave them an entire defeat; slew Pappus in the rout, and (had it not been for the severity of the winter, which was now approaching) had gone immediately to Jerusalem, and so made an end of the war: but that he was forced to refer to the operations of the next campaign.

When Herod came before Jerusalem, his own army consisted of about thirty thousand, to which Sosius †² brought eleven legions of foot, and six thousand horse, besides the auxiliary troops of Syria. However the city held out several months with a great deal of resolution; but at last the besieged being beaten out of all their places of defence, and the enemy exasperated at the length and tediousness of the siege, all things were in the utmost confusion. Rapine and devastation was the general work; and death and slaughter raged every where without distinction of age or sex. In vain did Herod endeavour to put a stop to this ravage and cruelty. "The spoils of the city, he was told, was the soldiers due as a reward for their labour and valour in taking it." So that, with a large sum of money, he was forced to preserve and redeem it.

Antigonus, seeing all lost, surrendered himself to Sosius, and in a submissive and abject manner fell at his feet imploring mercy: but Sosius insulting his meanness of spi-

† Where Cleopatra at this time was queen; who, by the charms of her beauty and wit, had drawn him into those snares which held him enslaved to her as long as he lived, and in the end caused his ruin. She was a woman of great parts, and spake several languages (as well as Latin and Greek) very fluently; but then she was a person of great vices, and (among others) of such insatiable avarice and ambition, that she made a conscience of nothing if she could but get by it. Her brother, a youth of about fifteen years of age, she caused to be dispatched, and prevailed with Anthony to have her sister Arsinoë cut off at Ephesus, even in the temple of Diana. Anthony indeed was a man of a sweet temper, and great generosity, an eloquent speaker, and a complete master in all military abilities: but then he was a great libertine in

his way, and so eager in the pursuit of his unlawful pleasures, that he stuck at nothing to attain them; by which means he brought himself so absolutely under the command of this wicked and voluptuous woman, that (as Josephus expresses it) "she seems not only to have captivated but bewitched him. *Prideaux's Connection*, Anno 30. and *Joseph. Antiq. lib. xv. c. 4.*

†² It is generally thought, that a legion was composed of ten cohorts; a cohort, of fifty maniples; a manipule, of fifty men, and consequently that a legion was a body of six thousand soldiers; but others are clearly of opinion, that it was an uncertain number, and contained sometimes four, sometimes five, and sometimes six thousand men. *Calmet's Dictionary* under the word, and *Prideaux's Connection*, Anno 37, in the Notes.

rit and want of courage, had him put in chains; and so leaving Herod in full possession of the kingdom, took his prisoner along with him to Anthony. Anthony at first intended to have reserved Antigonus in order to grace his triumph; but Herod not thinking himself safe in his kingdom as long as this remainder of the royal family continued alive, never left soliciting him, till at length by a good sum of money he obtained that this poor prince should be put to death; and with him ended the reign of the famous and illustrious house of the Asmonæans, (illustrious in itself, for the long continuance of the regal and sacerdotal succession in it, and no less famous for the many signal services which they and their ancestors, from time to time, had done the public) after it had lasted, from the beginning of Judas Maccabæus to this time, one hundred and twenty-nine years.

As soon as Herod had got full possession of the kingdom of Judea, he began to revenge himself on all those whom he looked upon as his enemies; and among these put all the members of the great Sanhedrim to death, except Pollio † and Sameas, who, during the siege, were all along for delivering up the city to Herod; whereas all the rest opposed the motion, and did what they could to excite the people to that fierce and obstinate resistance which they made. All this while Hyrcanus was captive in Parthia; and as the people wanted an high priest, Herod's business was to chuse a man of obscurity to that office, who, having no credit or interest at Jerusalem, might not be capable (notwithstanding his high station and dignity in the church) to interfere with the regal authority: and accordingly he sent for one Ananel from Babylon, (who was of the pontifical family indeed, but of no farther merit than that he was an acquaintance of Herod's) and put him into the office.

Mariamne, his best beloved wife, had then a brother whose name was Aristobulus, to whom by right of birth the high priesthood did belong; and as she was continually soliciting him in behalf of her brother, so her mother Alexandra, who was the daughter of Hyrcanus, and a woman of an high spirit, wrote to Cleopatra queen of Egypt, (who had an absolute ascendant over Anthony) to incline him to bestow the pontifical honour upon her son: so that, for fear of offending Anthony, more than for gratifying of the ladies, he deposed Ananel †², and made Aristobulus (who was then but a youth of seventeen years old) high priest in his stead.

† They are so named by Josephus, but the Jewish writers generally call them Hillel and Shammai; and of Hillel in particular they give us this account, viz. That he was born in Babylonia, and there lived till he was forty years old; that when he came to Jerusalem he betook himself to the study of the law, in which he grew so eminent, that after forty years more he became president of the Sanhedrim, and that in this office he continued forty years after; so that, according to this account, he lived full an hundred and twenty years; but the Jewish writers, for the sake of a round number, are frequently negligent whether they are exact or not in their chronological computations. Of Shammai they likewise tell us, that he was for some time the scholar of Hillel, and upon the removal of Manahem into Herod's service, was made vice-president of the Sanhedrim in his room; and that of all the tannaim, or mishnical doctors, he came nearest to his master in eminence of learning, though in many points he differed in opinion from him. What we are chiefly to observe in relation to these two men at present is—That Herod should thus generously forgive them both, though Shammai, or Sameas, was the person who appeared so intrepid against him at his trial before the Sanhedrim, and Hillel, or

Pollio, had all along warmly espoused the party of Hyrcanus. It must be presumed, however, that these two great men, whom he not only spared above all the rest, but took into his especial favour and confidence, had, during the siege, taken care to make their peace with him, by exhorting the besieged to surrender. For while the contrary faction was encouraging the people with crying out, "The temple of the Lord! the temple of the Lord!" and making them expect some miraculous deliverance, these two wise politicians, foreseeing that the city could not hold out much longer against such a vigorous siege, and under the excessive want of all provisions, told them, in short, that all resistance was in vain, since God, for their sins, was now bringing them into subjection to this foreigner; and this piece of service (had Herod been of a more vindictive temper than he really was) could not well fail of reconciling them to his favour. *Pri-deaux's Connection*, Anno 37. and *Joseph. Antiq. lib. xv. c. 1.*

†² This is the third person that had been deposed from the pontifical dignity since the time of the return from the Babylonish captivity; and Herod was so sensible of the illegality of it, that when Anthony sent to desire him to put Aristobulus into Ananel's

From Joseph.
lib. xiii. c. 19.
to the end of
lib. xv.

A. M. 3978,
&c. or 5374.
Ant. Chris.
26, &c.
or 74.

A. M. 3935,
&c. or 5342.
Ant. Chris.
69, &c.
or 69.

When Phraortes came to be king of Parthia, and was informed of Hyrcanus's character and quality, he treated him with great courtesy; for he ordered him to be released from his chains, and allowed him to reside at Babylon, which was then part of the Parthian empire, and where a great number of Jews dwelt, who paid him both the reverence due to an high priest and the honour due to a king.

In this condition Hyrcanus might have lived and ended his days very happily; but being desirous of returning to his native country, he began to entertain great hopes of Herod's friendship, as having been once the preserver of his life when he was arraigned before the Sanhedrim, and the founder indeed of all his fortunes. Herod, on the other hand, was desirous to have Hyrcanus in his power, as the other was to come; and therefore, he not only invited him with great earnestness, and greater promises, but sent an embassy to Phraortes to solicit his return. Thus having obtained the king's dismissal, the unfortunate old prince was carried back to Jerusalem, and for some time treated by Herod with all the outward tokens of kindness and respect.

His daughter Alexandra, having by her interest with Cleopatra obtained the high priesthood for her son, thought that (as it was his right) she might by the same means procure him the crown, and therefore went on intriguing with Cleopatra; which when Herod came to understand, he confined her to the palace, and set spies upon her. This she resented with great indignation as being made a prisoner, and therefore formed a design to make her escape, and to carry her son with her into Egypt to Cleopatra, who, upon this occasion, had invited them thither. But the design was discovered and their journey stopped. Herod, however, for fear of Cleopatra, was forced to suspend his resentment, and, making a virtue of necessity, pretended, with great clemency, to pardon in both what he could not well punish in either: But in a short time he had his revenge.

At the approach of the feast of tabernacles, Aristobulus was to officiate as high priest. He was a very beautiful person, tall, and well shapen, and in the eighteenth year of his age. In the time of his officiating he discharged himself with so becoming a reverence, and the splendour of the pontifical robes added such a lustre to the gracefulness of his person, that by both these he captivated the affections of the people, and every man's mouth was full of his praises; which raised the tyrant's jealousy to such a degree, that as soon as the festival was over, he had him drowned at Jericho †, though (to make his death pass for an unhappy accident wherein he had no hand) he acted the part of chief mourner, and expended a large sum in a splendid funeral for him: But his hypocrisy was seen through, and detested by all.

Alexandra, in particular, was inconsolable for the loss of her son; nor could she have survived it but for the hopes of having an opportunity of being revenged. To this purpose, having acquainted Cleopatra with the murder, she so represented Herod's villany, and her own distress, as moved the queen's compassion, and engaged her to do her utmost to revenge her cause: For she never left soliciting Anthony, till at length she prevailed with him to call Herod to an account for this wicked fact. But when Herod

place, at first he excused himself, by alleging that such depositions were contrary to the Mosaic law, which enjoined, that the dignity should last as long as the life of the possessor, unless some defect happened to disqualify him. The first instance we meet with of this kind is that of Jason's supplanting his brother Onias, and, by a larger sum of money, buying that office of Antiochus, in prejudice of the incumbent. The other was that of Hyrcanus, by his nephew Aristobulus, who wrested that dignity from him by main force. But these depositions became afterwards so frequent, that there was hardly any other

way of coming into that office but by the expulsion of the incumbent. *Universal History*, lib. ii. c. 11.

† Herod had invited him to an entertainment at Jericho, and when after dinner several of his attendants bathed themselves in a fish-pond, Aristobulus was prevailed upon to bear them company; but no sooner was he plunged into the water, but those that were in it before (according as they were directed by Herod), ducked and dipped him (by way of sport and play, as they pretended) so long under water that at length he was actually drowned. *Joseph. Antiq. lib. xv. c. 3.*

appeared before him, by fair words and large presents he so effectually wrought upon Anthony, that instead of condemning, he seemed to vindicate him for what he had done: Whereupon, returning with much joy, and in triumph, as it were, over his accusers, he grew more tyrannical than ever, and in a short time shut up Alexandra in close confinement.

From Joseph.
lib. xiii. c. 19.
to the end of
lib. xv.

When he went to appear before Anthony, he left his uncle Joseph in the administration of the government, and gave him particular charge, that in case Anthony should put him to death, he should not suffer Mariamne, his best beloved wife, to survive the first news of it, that none (as he pretended) † might enjoy so rare a beauty but himself. In his absence some words had passed between Mariamne and his sister Salome, wherein the queen reproached her with the meanness of her original, in comparison of the royal stock of the Asmonæans from whom she descended. This the other was resolved to revenge; and therefore, as soon as Herod returned, she accused Mariamne of having too great a familiarity with Joseph, whom (though he was her own husband as well as her uncle) she was content to sacrifice, rather than not obtain her will upon the other. One thing that might contribute to the increase of Herod's jealousy, and the confirmation of what his sister had told him, was the fatal secret which Joseph had indiscreetly blabbed out, and Mariamne in her passion could not retain; for nothing less than an adulterous conversation (he thought) could have produced such a discovery: And therefore, when she upbraided him with it, he was going to draw his dagger, and strike her to the heart; but though his love interposed to save her, he ordered his uncle immediately to be executed, without allowing him leave so much as to speak for himself; which, when he came to know his innocence, and the queen's virtue, he could not but regret.

While these things were thus going on in Judea there happened a grievous breach * between Anthony and Octavianus, which terminated in a civil war, wherein Anthony, at the battle of Actium, was quite ruined and undone. During the whole course of this war, Herod had always followed Anthony's party, and had therefore reason to fear that the conqueror would deprive him of his kingdom for being so firm a friend to his enemy, and perhaps restore again Hyrcanus, who had once reigned under the protection of the Romans; and therefore, to prevent this, upon pretence of his holding correspondence with Malchus king of Arabia, in order to accomplish some treasonable designs against him, he *² caused him to be put to death, after he had passed the eightieth year

† This he did, not so much that none else might have the enjoyment of the beautiful Mariamne, as that none might be left alive of the Asmonæan family to claim the crown, in opposition to that disposal which he had made of it to his brother Pheroras. Alexandra, the mother of Mariamne, he knew very well was a crafty and aspiring woman; and therefore, being apprehensive that the scheme which he had laid for the succession could not take place if either she or her daughter were left alive after him, he ordered that both of them should be put to death, in case he should miscarry in his application to Anthony. *Joseph. Antiq. lib. xv. c. 11.*

* Anthony had provoked Octavianus against him, by the wrong done to Octavia his sister, whom Anthony had married, and yet divorced her for the gratification of his adulterous love to Cleopatra, though Octavia was much the handsomer of the two. Anthony had likewise given out that Cleopatra had been married to Julius Cæsar, and that Cæsarion, whom she had by him, was his lawful son, and consequently

had the proper right to the inheritance which Octavianus held only as his adopted son. These things were objected against Anthony; and Anthony, by his agents and letters, was not forgetful to recriminate. But these things were no more than pretences: The true reason of their disagreement was, that both these two great men, being not contented with half of the Roman empire, were each resolved to have all, and accordingly agreed to throw the die of war for it. *Plutarch de Antonio, and Prideaux's Connection, Anno 33.*

*² The character which Josephus gives of this prince is to this effect.—He was a man of eminent candour, justice, and moderation; but a lover of his ease, and so conscious to himself of his own insufficiency for the offices of public administration, that for the most part he entrusted that charge in other hands. This facility of his was the making of Antipater and Herod's fortune, though (without any colour of law or equity) it cost him his life. *Jewish Antiquities, lib. xv. c. 9.*

A. M. 3978, of his age. His wife Mariamne and her mother he secured in the castle of Alexand-
 &c. or 5374. drion, with a strong guard under the command of Sohemus, and with the same order
 Ant. Christ. that he had left with his uncle Joseph before; and having committed the government
 26, &c. or 74. of the kingdom to the care of Pheroras, another of his brothers, he set forward on his
 journey to meet Octavianus.

Octavianus was then at Rhodes, where Herod having obtained audience, as he entered into his presence laid aside his diadem, and, in his address to him, freely owned all that he had done for Anthony, and what he was farther ready to have done, had he required it of him. "This, he said, he thought himself obliged to by the friendship that was between them; and would he be pleased to think the like friendship worthy of his acceptance, (since Anthony was now quite lost), he would not fail to serve him with the same zeal and fidelity." This Herod delivered with such an intrepidity, that Octavianus, pleased with the spirit of the man, caused him to put on his diadem again, accepted of his friendship, and confirmed him in the kingdom of Judea.

Pleased with this good success Herod went back to Judea with great joy; but on his arrival found all his felicity soured with the troubles of his own family. Mariamne, his most beloved wife, in whose conversation he took the greatest delight, having bribed the secret out of Sohemus, conceived thereupon such a strong hatred and aversion to him, that she refused his embraces with scorn, and concealing the true cause of her resentment, was perpetually upbraiding him with the murder of her nearest relations; so that by this provoking treatment his patience was almost quite worn out. Hearing however of the death of Anthony and Cleopatra, and how Octavianus had thereupon made himself master of all Egypt, he thought himself obliged to wait on him there likewise.

He was received with great kindness, and having in his return accompanied him to Antioch, he so far ingratiated himself with him on the way, that he granted him several places in augmentation of his dominions, and, for ever after, of all the tributary princes in the Roman empire, gave him the first place in his favour. But how prosperous soever he was in his affairs abroad, when he returned he found nothing but trouble and vexation at home. Mariamne still retained her resentment for the cruel commission given to Sohemus; so that when he offered her his caresses, she not only rejected them (as usual) with the utmost aversion, but added over and above such bitter reproaches for the death of her relations, as provoked and enraged him to so high a degree, that he could hardly forbear laying violent hands upon her. This fit of rage her implacable enemy Salome took the advantage of, and sent in his butler (whom she had before suborned for that purpose) to accuse the queen of having tempted him to give the king poison; whereupon he ordered her favourite eunuch, without whose privity he knew she did nothing, to be put upon the rack; but all that he confessed was, that something, which Sohemus had told Mariamne was the cause of her being out of humour.

Upon the hearing of this, Herod fell into a rage of jealousy; and supposing that nothing but a criminal intimacy could have induced Sohemus to betray this secret to her, he ordered him immediately to be put to death; and then, calling together a council of his friends, and accusing her of an intention to take away his life, he had her condemned, but not with a design to have her put to death; but the malice of his mother and sister was so bitter against her, they would not let him be quiet. They knew very well his temper; and being apprehensive, that as long as she was alive he might easily relapse into his former fondness, they urged the necessity of her speedy execution, and had that influence over him, that he commanded her immediately to be put to death. But he soon repented him of his rashness. For after that his rage was quenched by her blood, his love revived, and the consideration of what he had done filled his mind with the agonies of remorse, and the regret of her loss affected him so that he fell dangerous-

ly ill; but, upon recovery, he nevertheless gave orders for the execution of Alexandra, for having too easily credited the news that was spread abroad of his death.

From Joseph.
lib. xiii. c. 19.
to the end of
lib. xv.

He had two sons by Mariamne, Alexander and Aristobulus, whom he had sent to Rome for the benefit of education; but upon their return home, by the same instruments that had procured their mother's death, they fell under their father's displeasure. For having in the heat of their youth let fall many rash words, which expressed their resentment of their mother's hard usage, with threats of revenge upon those that had been the chief authors of it; all this was carried to their father with such malicious glosses and comments upon it, as made him believe that they were hatching ill designs against his person. He was naturally of a jealous temper; and this was so improved by the artifices of Pheroras and Salome, his brother and sister, that in a council, which consisted of none but his own creatures, he procured their condemnation *, and so ordered them to be strangled: And it was upon the account of their fate, and the execution of Antipater †, another of his sons after this, (who was, in reality, for procuring his father's

* Josephus has represented this whole proceeding in this light.—When Herod had complained to Augustus of the undutiful behaviour of his sons, how they had plotted against his life, and designed to have made their escape out of his dominions, Augustus advised him to call together a council at Berytus in Phœnicia, and so to inquire into the nature of their offences. This Herod accordingly did; but when he came into the assembly, (which consisted of an hundred and fifty persons) such as Augustus had directed him to, (except Archilaus, king of Cappadocia, who, being father-in-law to Alexander, was thought by Herod too much engaged by that relation to be an impartial judge in this matter) he began to accuse his sons with great vehemence and passion; and after having spoken in terms very unbecoming a father, he said, "That not only Augustus had made him master of his sons destiny, but that the very laws of the Jews declared, That if a son was accused by his parents, and they put their hands upon his head, all who were present should stone him, and put him to death; and therefore, though he might treat his sons in this manner, after the crimes whereof they stood convicted, yet he chose rather to have their opinions upon the matter, not doubting but that they would join with him in giving an example to future ages, of that just severity which ought to be exercised upon unnatural children." Saturninus, a man of consular dignity, who was at the head of the council, was for punishing Alexander and Aristobulus, but not with death; and his three sons, who were present with him, concurred in the same opinion; but Volumnius pronounced that they were worthy of death; which the majority of the assembly too readily coming into, carried the question. On this occasion every one pitied the two princes, but no one durst speak plainly for fear of incurring the king's displeasure: But at last an old soldier of the king's, who had a son about Alexander's age, and his particular friend, took the liberty to make some sharp remonstrances to the king, telling him withal, that not only the officers and soldiers, but the whole body of the people, were moved with compassion for the young princes, and pitied their sad fate. Whereupon the king, losing all patience, commanded the soldier and his son to be seized, and

all besides whom he had named. When the old man was put upon the rack, he confessed that he had taken up a resolution to kill the king, and to expose himself, for the love of Alexander, to all sorts of punishment. This confession both enraged and intimidated Herod, so that he sent his sons immediately to Sebaste, (formerly called Samaria) and there ordered them to be strangled. [According to Dr Hales, B. C. 6.] And thus ended the life of these two unfortunate brothers, who, by too much resentment for their mother's death, provoked those who had been the chief authors of it, by the like artifices to procure theirs. Vid. *Josephus's* reflection hereupon, *Jewish Antiquities*, lib. xvi. c. 17.

† This Antipater was Herod's eldest son by Doris, a woman of no quality, and whilst himself was a private man; for which reason he kept him and his mother for some time at a distance from court: But when he began to take offence at Alexander and Aristobulus, his two sons by Mariamne, he thereupon treated him with a great deal of distinction, and in a full assembly of the people declared him his immediate heir to the crown. After the death of Mariamne's sons, he had nothing that stood in his way but only the life of his father Herod: And to get rid of him, he formed a conspiracy with his uncle Pheroras, (who at this time was in some disgrace with his brother the king) to have him poisoned: But that there might be no suspicion of his being concerned in the thing, he procured some of his friends to send for him to Rome, (where he had been before under Agrippa's protection) on pretence of waiting upon Augustus. Herod, however, having found out the whole plot, wrote to his son, without giving him the least hint of it, to hasten his journey home, lest something should happen in his absence to his great disadvantage; whereupon he returned into Palestine without the least suspicion of what had passed. When he came to Jerusalem, his friends who attended him were not permitted to enter the palace; and when he went to embrace the king, the king thrust him from him, upbraiding him with the murder of his brothers Alexander and Aristobulus, and with the parricide which he intended to have committed on his person, and whereof he accused him the next day before

A. M. 3978, death) that Octavianus (then called Augustus) was used to say, "that it was better to be Herod's hog than his son." &c. or 5374.
Ant. Chris. 26, &c. or 74.

But whatever opinion Augustus might have of Herod, it is certain that Herod had no small veneration for him, or at least carried his compliments very far. For he not only built two stately cities and called them both by his name *, but in the very city of Jerusalem built a theatre and an amphitheatre, and in honour of Augustus celebrated games and exhibited shows, which gave great disgust to the Jews, as things inconsistent with the legal constitutions and religion of their country. Nay, to such a degree of complaisance proceeded he, as not only to set up the Roman ensign † (which was the figure of an eagle) over one of the gates of the temple, but even to raise a sumptuous temple all of white marble in memory of the favours which Augustus had conferred on him; though, by this act of idolatrous flattery, he alienated the hearts of the Jews, and raised some conspirators ‡ against his life.

To recover therefore their good opinion, and to make some amends for these breaches upon their law, in the nineteenth year of his reign he formed a design of rebuilding the temple *, which, by length of time, (having now stood five hundred years) as well

Quintilius Varus, the governor of Syria. The proof was so plain against him, that Antipater, having nothing to say in his justification, was loaded with irons and put in prison. But while he was there, a false report being spread that Herod was dead, he begged of his keeper to set him at liberty, and made him large promises if he would do it; which being brought to his father's ear, as weak as he was, (for he died in a few days after) he raised himself upon his elbow, and calling one of his guards, sent him that moment to dispatch his son. *Joseph. Antiq. lib. xvii. c. 7, and 9. and De Bello. lib. i. c. 21.*

* The one was Sabaste, which signifies the same in Greek as Augustus does in Latin. It was situated on the same place where stood Samaria, which Hircanus had destroyed, and was in part rebuilt by Gabinius when he was governor of Syria, and called after his name; but as he was soon turned out of his government, it advanced no farther than a good large village, until Herod (who from his stately structures was afterwards called the Great) undertook to finish it, and, in so doing, spared no cost to make it one of the richest and most beautiful cities in his kingdom.—The other was Cæsaria, so called in honour of the emperor, though its former appellation was the tower of Straton. It stood by the sea-side, on the coasts of Phœnicia, upon the pass into Egypt, and was very convenient for trade, but that it had a bad harbour. To remedy this, therefore, he ordered a mole to be made in the form of an half-moon, and large enough for a royal navy to ride in. The buildings of the town were all of marble, private houses as well as palaces, but the master-piece of all was the port; whereof we meet with a description in *Josephus's* Antiquities, lib. xv. c. 13.

† This gave great offence to the Jews, because the Romans were known to pay divine honours to their ensigns, which they used to set up in some eminent place in their camp; according to that known passage of Tertullian, "Religio Romanorum tota castrensis, signa veneratur, signa jurat, signa omnibus diis præponit."

‡ There is a remarkable one of this kind, which is

related by Josephus to this effect:—Ten citizens, taking offence at Herod's bringing in the rites of heathenish superstition, entered into a conspiracy to cut him off by an assassination. One of these conspirators was blind, and, though in no condition to act any thing for the public good, offered to bear his part in suffering for it, and, by this generous offer, settled them all in their determinations. They therefore provided themselves with daggers under their garments, and went to the theatre, where Herod was to come, with a full intent to slay him there; but as he was entering the theatre, one of his spies (for he had great plenty of them) having got some notice of the matter, made a discovery of it to him; so that, returning to his palace, he sent for the conspirators; who were so far from denying their design, that they produced the very daggers that were to have done the execution, alleging for themselves, "that they were not engaged in any criminal combination to gratify their passions or interests, but in a secret league for the common good and the defence of their laws, which all true patriots and professors were bound to maintain with their lives." After this declaration they were hurried away to death, and made to undergo the most exquisite torments. But the infamous informer did not long survive them; for, having incurred the general odium of the people, he was met by some in a private place and torn to pieces. *Jewish Antiq. lib. xv. c. 11.*

* Whatever some Jewish Rabbins may tell us, it is certain, that the temple of Herod was widely different from that of Solomon, and from that which was built by Zerubbabel after the captivity; for the description of it, according to Josephus, who himself had seen it, is much to this purpose.—The front of this magnificent building, which resembled that of a royal palace, was adorned with many rich spoils, which the kings of the Jews had dedicated to God as the monuments of their victories. The middle of it, which was much higher than the two extremes, afforded a very agreeable prospect to the extent of several furlongs to those that either lived in the country, or were travelling to the city. The gate of it

as the violence of enemies, was in a very decayed and ruinous condition. In two years time he got together all proper materials, and in nine || and an half more, had it so far

From Joseph.
lib. xiii. c. 19.
to the end of
lib. xv.

was a very curious piece of workmanship. From the top of it hung a variety of rich tapestry of several colours, embellished with purple flowers. On each side of it stood a stately pillar, with a golden vine creeping and twining about it, whose branches were laden with a cluster of grapes, that hung dangling down from the cornices. Round about the temple were large galleries, answerable to the rest of the work in magnificence, and in beauty much exceeding all that had been before. The temple was surrounded by three courts or enclosures. The first enclosure, which was a square of a furlong on every side, had a gate on the east, another on the south, and another on the north side; but it had four towards the west; one leading to the palace, another into the city, and two more into the fields. It was secured without by a strong wall, and within was adorned with stately porticos or galleries, sustained by no less than 162 columns of Corinthian work, and all so very thick, that hardly three men could grasp one with their arms. They supported a roof of cedar very curiously wrought, and made three galleries; the two outermost of which were of the same dimensions, i. e. thirty feet in breadth, fifty in height, and a furlong in length; but that in the middle was half as broad again as the other, and twice as high. The court or area before these galleries was paved with marble of several colours, and at a little distance was a second enclosure, formed by an handsome ballustrade of stone, with pillars at equal distances, whereon were inscriptions in Greek and Latin, giving warning to all strangers not to proceed any farther upon pain of death. To this enclosure there was but one entrance towards the east, but towards the north and south, at equal distances, three. In the middle of these two enclosures there was a third, which included the temple, strictly so called, and the altar of burnt-sacrifices, which was fifty cubits high, and forty cubits wide every way, all built of rough stones, on which no tool had ever been used. Into this court (which none but priests were permitted to enter) there were nine gates; one towards the east, four towards the south, and as many towards the north; but towards the west there was no gate, only one great wall ran all along from north to south. At the entrance of each gate within were large rooms in form of pavilions, of thirty cubits square, and forty high, supported by a pillar of eighteen feet in circumference; and the whole was adorned with porticos, sustained by two rows of pillars, to the east, north, and south, but towards the west there was nothing but the wall just now mentioned. This is the description of the temple, as it was repaired by Herod, that may be extracted from Joseph. Antiq. lib. xv. c. 13. But whoever is desirous to know these things more minutely, must consult those authors that have wrote upon them *ex professo*; among which Messrs de Beausobre and Lenfant, in their general preface to the New Testament, have given us no bad sketch; and Jurieu, in his Hist. des Dogmes, &c. has rectified some mistakes in the account of Jo-

sephus, part ii. c. 4.

[It is very true, as our author says, that the temple, as rebuilt by Herod, was very different both from the temple of Solomon and from that of Zerubbabel, certainly more magnificent than the latter, and probably even than the former. It was however by the Jews uniformly denominated the *second* temple, and is so called expressly by Josephus himself—the most candid and intelligent of all the Jewish writers since the commencement of the Christian era. “From the *second* building of it, which, according to him, was done by Haggai, in the second year of Cyrus the king, till its destruction under Vespasian, there were (says he—*Bell. Jud.* lib. vi. c. 4. § 8.) six hundred and thirty-nine years and forty days.” There was not perhaps one stone in the temple built by Herod that was in that built by Zerubbabel, or, as Josephus says, by Haggai, and yet these two temples were called *one*, with just as much propriety as a river continues to have the same name to-day that it had yesterday, or when it overflows its banks that it had when its channel was not half filled. There is not one drop of water in any part of a river to-day that was in that part of it yesterday; nor is a river so majestic when its channel is almost dry, as when its banks are overflowed. But it is not to rivers only and other works of nature that the same name is continued after the matter so denominated has been wholly changed. A British ship of war continues to have the same name, after having undergone so many repairs as not to have one piece of timber, perhaps, remaining that was in the ship to which the name was originally given; and this practice of continuing the name is undoubtedly proper, because, during all these repairs and partial changes, the ship remained part of the navy of England, and was never perhaps six months incapable of contributing to the defence of the empire. It was just so with the Jewish temple. Herod did not begin to pull down any part of the old house, till the materials for building the new one were all prepared and collected on the spot; and even then he pulled down partially, rebuilding as he pulled down, so that there is reason to believe that daily sacrifices were never interrupted. The identity of Zerubbabel’s temple therefore was as faithfully preserved by Herod, as is the identity of any old ship of war that has undergone many thorough repairs; but this was not the case with respect to Solomon’s temple, for when it was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, the daily sacrifices were interrupted completely for upwards of fifty years.]

|| And yet the Jews could tell our Saviour, that “forty and six years had the temple been building,” John ii. 20. but this is easily reconciled. For though at the time, when the Jews spake to our Saviour, six and forty years had passed from the time that this building was begun, yet in nine years and an half it was made fit for divine service. The out-buildings however were far from being finished; and therefore a great number of labourers and artificers were con-

A. M. 4001, finished as to make it fit for Divine service ; though, to carry on the out-buildings, &c. or 5394. workmen were continued about it to the time of our Saviour's ministry, and longer.

Ant. Chris.
1, &c. or 17.
aut. Ær.
Vulg. 3.

While these things were doing in Judea, the temple of Janus was shut at Rome. In times of war the custom was to have its gates laid open, but shut in the time of peace ; it was now the fifth time since the building of that city that the gates of this temple had been shut. The first time was in the reign of Numa ; the second, after the end of the first Punic war ; the third, after Augustus's victory over Anthony and Cleopatra ; the fourth, upon his return from the Cantabrian war in Spain ; and the fifth now, in the twenty-sixth year of his reign, and in the thirty-third of Herod's, when a general peace (which lasted for twelve years together) prevailed over the world, and was a proper prelude for ushering in the advent || of the Prince of Peace, even Christ our Lord, who (according to the exactest computation) was born in the four thousandth year * [according to Dr Hales in the 5411th year] of the world's creation.

A. M. 4001,
&c. or 5410.
Ant. Chris.
1, &c. or 1.
aut. Ær.
Vulg. 3.

tinued at work, all the time that our Saviour was upon earth, and for some years after ; till upon the coming of Gessius Florus, to be governor of Judea, eighteen thousand of them were discharged at one time ; and these, for want of other employ, began those mutinies and seditions, which at last drew on the destruction of Jerusalem, and the temple with it. *Joseph. Antiq. lib. xx. c. 8.*

|| According to the vulgar era, Christ was born in the four thousand and fourth year of the world's creation ; but this way of computation (though it be commonly used, especially in this western part of the world) is a manifest mistake, which Dionysius Exiguus, a Scythian by birth, and afterwards a Roman abbot, was the first author of. In the first ages of Christianity, Christians had no particular epocha to themselves ; they generally used that of the building of the city, or the years of the Cæsars in common with the Romans. The first that they made use of was the era of Dioclesian ; for his terrible persecution had made such an impression on their minds, that the time when it happened was long had in remembrance. It was in the year 527 of the vulgar Christian era, and not sooner, that the world began to compute time from our Saviour's birth ; and therefore the wonder is less, that after so great a distance of time, this Roman abbot should make a mistake in fixing the first year of it : but the misfortune was, that before the mistake was discovered, our countryman Bede's taking it without examination from him, and using it in all his writings, gave it a sanction ; nor has the learned world as yet thought fit to correct it, out of a persuasion, I presume, that there may be some danger in altering things that are settled. It is thought sufficient for the purposes of Chronology that there is a certain Christian era fixed, which every one knows, and reckons by, though there may be some mistake as to the particular time when it should have commenced. In short, this error has been too long followed to be corrected, which must of course alter all dates, and give the world too much trouble ;

and therefore it is but calling it a vulgar Christian era, and remembering that Christ was born four years before it began ; it is but remembering, I say, that the year which we now write 1743, ought to be 1747, and all is well. *Prideaux's Preface to the first part of his Connection, and Hearne's System of Universal History, lib. i. c. 3.*

* This, we may observe, falls in exactly with the time where an old tradition of the Jews places the beginning of the days of the Messiah. According to that tradition, the world was to last six thousand years ; two thousand before the law, two thousand under the law, and two thousand under the Messiah. This tradition is of great antiquity, and looked upon as authentic as any of this sort ; and though its pretending to foretel when the world shall end (which the Scriptures make a secret that God had reserved for himself), sufficiently shews its vanity, yet since the Jews have thought fit to place it among the most authentic of their traditions, it serves against them, 1st, To prove the time when, according to their own doctrine, the Messiah was to come ; and, 2dly, To convict them of their gross and most perverse infidelity, in that, though Christ was born in the four thousandth year of the creation, from which (according to this their tradition) his appearance was to commence, they have now suffered above seventeen hundred and twenty years to pass, and have not yet acknowledged him. *Prideaux's Connection, Anno 4.* [This is very well argued, if the Jewish tradition respecting the ages of the world were exactly such as it is here said to have been ; but there is good reason to believe that it was very different. According to the Rabbinical tradition, founded, as the Jews pretended, on prophecy, the world was to last 7000 years, and the Messiah to make his appearance about the middle of the sixth Millenary, or the year of the world 5500 ; and, according to Dr Hales's computations, he actually appeared in the year 5411. See vol. 1st of this Work, book i. chap. v. p. 82. Note †.]

THE OBJECTION.

“**J**OSEPHUS indeed may be a good historian, and his account of the Jewish affairs of some help to fill up the chasm from that period, where not only the sacred penmen, but the authors of the Acts of the Maccabees, are likewise known to leave us ; but to his credit it would tend not a little, if we could find any profane writer of good authority making mention of the two great things that stagger our faith, viz. Alexander’s adventure with the high priest at Jerusalem, and the wonderful production of the Septuagint version.

From Joseph.
lib. xiii. c. 19.
to the end of
lib. xv.

For is it not very strange, that none of the heathen historians, either Greek or Latin, who trace this great conqueror, as it were, through every step he takes, should ever give us the least hint of his having been at Jerusalem ? If he was incensed against the Jews while he was at the siege of Tyre (*a*), for refusing to furnish him with provisions and forces, how can we think that a mock procession of a parcel of priests in pontificalibus, could ever be of efficacy enough to divert the rage of a prince of his impetuous temper ?

But supposing a Divine interposition in this case, yet how comes this Alexander, who was of a different religion, to conform so far to the Jewish way of worship, as to offer sacrifices to the God of Israel ? Phœnicians indeed he might have in his army, (*b*) but where he could pick up any Chaldean troops, (as Josephus (*c*) tells us he had several with him) when he had not yet been at Babylon, is somewhat unaccountable ; and though he might be very liberal in his favours to the people of Jerusalem, and grant them several immunities, yet it is not a little incongruous (*d*) that the high priest should petition him for the like privileges to be extended to the captive Jews in Babylonia and Medea, when as yet he had not made the least conquest in either of these countries.

Upon the whole, therefore, we may conclude, that, as the Jews (*e*) at this time were very much addicted to religious romances, Josephus might give his invention some scope in this matter, as thinking it a diminution to the honour of his nation, to have so great a man as this, sovereign conqueror of the world, come into the neighbouring nations without paying a visit to Jerusalem ; and, when he was once there, it was necessary that something extraordinary should happen at his reception.

The like piece of fiction, we may reasonably presume, is the account which this historian gives us of the Septuagint Version at Alexandria. For, besides the difficulty of conceiving how these seventy-two elders, who were sent from Judea (*f*), (where neither Greek nor Hebrew were at this time in common use) should so far become masters of both languages as to be able, in the space of seventy-two days, to finish a translation of the Scriptures ; it appears from other histories, that Demetrius Phalerius (who is made the chief agent in this whole affair) was at this time in no manner of confidence with Ptolemy Philadelphus ; and though it may not be thought beneath his dignity to be the king’s librarian, yet he was now in prison, if not in his grave, for being an enemy to the king’s succession.

It seems improbable, however, that if he was alive and in favour, he should address the king, concerning this interpretation, by way of epistle, (as we find he does in (*g*) Jo-

(*a*) *Joseph. Antiq. lib. xi. c. 8.*

(*b*) *Ibid.*

(*c*) *Moyle’s Works, vol. ii.*

(*d*) *Prideaux’s Connection, Anno 277.*

(*e*) *Moyle’s Works, vol. ii.*

(*f*) *Prideaux’s*

Connection, Anno 277.

(*g*) *Jewish Antiq. lib. xii. c. 2.*

A. M. 4001,
&c. or 5410.
Ant. Chris.
1, &c. or 1.
aut Ær.
Vulg. 3.

sephus) when he was every day at court, and had an easy access to him; that the king should trouble himself about asking the interpreters such questions as are related in the history of Aristæas, to which the same Josephus (*a*) refers us; and, above all, that he should advance such an incredible sum of money †, as one way or other amounts to two millions Sterling, (more than his whole library was worth) and all for the version of one single book, which neither he nor any of his court (as long as they continued heathens) could have any other value for than as it was a true and genuine history. But all this Josephus might say, out of a pious design perhaps, to gain among the vulgar the greater veneration and authority to a translation of the Scriptures, which was then more in use than the original itself."

ANSWER. It cannot be expected, indeed, that any human composition should be without faults, and, least of all, can history promise itself that exemption, when it has so many distant and abstruse matters to enquire into, and is forced in many cases to take up with the testimony, and sometimes the conjectures of others. It may be said, however, in favour of Josephus, that the records from whence he compiled his history of the Jews, were either those of their own sacred Hebrew books; those of the prophets during the continuance of their succession; or those of the most authentic writers that flourished in their nation all along afterward: for in the main he was not so much an original historian himself as an abridger of such ancient histories as he found in the highest esteem and veneration: and how fair and impartial he has been, about these times more particularly, in making this compilation, any one may perceive that will but give himself the trouble of comparing his abridgment of the first book of the Maccabees with the book itself. So justly might Suidas give (*b*) Josephus the title of a lover of truth, and so truly might Josephus say of himself at the conclusion of his Antiquities, as well as of his Jewish Wars, "As for the style and manner of my writing them, that I submit to the judgment of my readers; but as for the candour and sincerity of my accounts, I do here declare to the world, that I have kept strictly to the truth, and have had nothing else in view through the course of my whole work."

(*c*) That Alexander the Great, after his having taken the city of Tyre, invaded the northern parts of Judea, and went as far as the balsam-trees, near Jericho, not only Eusebius in his Chronicon, but Pliny * in his Natural History likewise, directly informs us; and that he not only subdued that part of Syria which is called Palestine, but went also about at this time to those cities that refused to submit to him, we have the concurring testimony both of Curtius (*d*) and Arrian (*e*); and, if their testimony be true, it is very presumable that he did not forget to visit Jerusalem in his indignation for its having refused to send him supplies.

The Samaritans indeed acted another part: They obeyed Alexander's summons, and went, in a body of eight thousand men, to his assistance at Tyre. As soon as he had

(*a*) *Jewish Antiq.* lib. xii. c. 1.

† According to Aristæas, Ptolemy expended, in redeeming the captive Jews that were in his kingdom, 650 talents; in vessels of silver sent to the temple, 70 talents; in vessels of gold for the same use, 50 talents; in precious stones to adorn these vessels, 250 talents; in gifts for sacrifices, 100 talents; to the interpreters, at their first coming, three talents a-piece, in silver, 12,216 talents in the whole; and, lastly, to each of them, at their parting, two talents of gold, and a golden cup of a talent weight, which, in the sum total, making 1046 talents of silver and 516 talents of gold, will, when reduced to our Sterling money, amount to one million nine hundred and eighteen thousand five hundred and thirty-seven pounds ten shil-

lings; besides the charges he was at fetching these interpreters to Alexandria, maintaining them there, and sending them back again to Jerusalem. *Prideaux's Connection*, Anno 277.

(*b*) Page 1261.

(*c*) Mr *Whiston's* Alexander at Jerusalem.

* Therein he tells us, that as this tree was peculiar to Judea (he might have said to that part near Jericho), Alexander, when he waged war there, caused an experiment to be made of the quantity of balsam that was distilled from one of these trees; and upon trial it was found, that, on a summer's day, so much would drop from one as filled a concha. *Natural History*, lib. xii. c. 25.

(*d*) Lib. iv. c. 17.

(*e*) Lib. I.

carried the place, they marched with his army to Jerusalem, and these are the men whom Josephus joins with the Phœnicians, though, by an error of the press, or transcription at first, they are called *Χαλδαίους* instead of *Χυθαίους* (according to Bishop Lloyd's emendation), Chaldeans instead of Cuthians, or Samaritans, the old inveterate enemies of the Jews, and who therefore were glad of this opportunity of destroying them, and promised themselves (as Josephus (*a*) expresses it) "all the licence of blood and pillage upon the high priest himself, as well as upon the citizens, that rage or revenge could draw from a victorious prince, under the sense and provocation of the affront he had received."

From Joseph,
lib. xiii. c. 19.
to the end of
lib. xv.

Alexander accordingly comes, breathing out wrath against the Jews, and, with his victorious army, is ready to revenge the insolent message "of their being unwilling to fight for any but his enemy Darius." But instead of that, in a day or two he goes away with the greatest love and kindness for them; permits them to live by their ancient laws; forgives them the tribute of the Sabbatical year; readily invites them to fight for him as his allies, and the very next year, in his own new built city of Alexandria, gives them all equal privileges with the Macedonians themselves. Now this sudden alteration of his cannot well be imputed to any thing else but a Divine interposition; and therefore, since Plutarch (*b*) informs us, that it was no unusual thing for this great man to be influenced in his conduct by dreams and visions, on other occasions, it is highly probable that this remarkable change in him did likewise depend upon the remembrance of the vision which he had at Dio, in Macedonia, as himself relates in the history.

(*c*) The like is to be said of the change that was made at this juncture in the conduct of the high priest and all the people. For since, before this, they durst not fight against Darius for their oath's sake, and yet could now, without any scruple, go into that very army which had twice conquered his forces, and was then going to take away all his dominions; they must have had such a Divine warrant for doing this, as the vision and admonition, which the night before was given to the high priest, may be interpreted to imply. This indeed, we own, is all providential and miraculous: But if we look into their histories, whether canonical or apocryphal, we shall find that, from the days of Abraham to the days of Josephus himself, things of this nature were very common among the Jews.

The short of the matter is this:—The Jews at this time had certainly a great and eminent deliverance; but then the question is, whence did this deliverance come? (*d*) If we judge by the entire history of the Jewish nation, we shall expect it to have been after some extraordinary and providential manner. The Jewish records tell us that it was really so, and give us the particular account of it. The heathen records say nothing at all, either against it or about it; and therefore we must be left at liberty to think, that the authority of the Jewish historian who relates it (if nothing absurd or incongruous appears in his relation), does certainly preponderate such a negative argument, as the bare omission of one transaction by some later heathen historians can amount to.

Upon the supposition, then, that Alexander, by this supernatural direction, entered Jerusalem in a peaceable manner, his offering sacrifice to the God of Israel, whom, according to the principles of his own religion, he might take for the national God of the Jews, was exactly agreeable, as appears by the several accounts of his life, to his usual method upon the like occasions; and his promising to grant the same immunities, he had given to them in Judea, to the Jews in Media and Babylonia (though he had not as yet conquered these countries), was the natural result of his having seen the prophecy

(*a*) *Jewish Antig.* lib. xi. c. 8.
Jerusalem.

(*d*) *Ibid.*

(*b*) In *Alexandro*.

(*c*) Mr *Whiston's Alexander* at

A. M. 4001;
&c. or 5410.
Ant. Chris.
1, &c. or 1.
aut. Ær.
Vulg. 3.

of Daniel, which, both he and the high priest, fully persuaded themselves that he was the person appointed by Providence to fulfil.

Now, whoever considers the natural effects of conquests, what changes and revolutions they make, not only in the constitution but in the language likewise of any kingdom, and how fatally prone the very conquered are to learn the speech, as well as imitate the manners, of those that have brought them under subjection, will have no occasion to wonder that, after the reduction of Judea by a Grecian prince, and a prince who had distinguished that nation above all others with his royal favours, the Grecian language should soon grow into request, especially among the people of the better fashion, and such as made learning their profession.

(a) The Macedonians had not long made themselves masters of Babylon, before Berossus (who is said by Tatian to have lived in the time of Alexander) became such a proficient in the Greek tongue, that in it he wrote the history of the affairs of the Chaldeans, and the actions of their kings, whereof we have some fragments in the writings of Josephus and Eusebius; and (b) not long after him Manetho, a priest of Heliopolis in Egypt, in the same language wrote his commentaries of the Egyptian affairs, which he dedicated to this very Ptolemy Philadelphus, for whose use the Septuagint translation was made. The Greek language, in short, spread itself abroad wherever Alexander's arms prevailed, and soon became the universal language of the polite and learned; and therefore we can hardly suppose, but that, in a populous nation, there should be found a competent number of persons duly qualified to translate a short book (for the Pentateuch † was all that they translated, and this every one knows is far from being a long one) into a language that was then in the highest vogue, from another in which some of their doctors are said to have been so critically, so minutely skilled, as to be able to tell how often each letter occurred in the whole.

Demetrius Phalereus was not only a learned philosopher, but a person likewise of great wisdom, justice, and probity, as appeared by his government of Athens †² under Cassander, one of Alexander's captains: but being expelled from thence by the prevailing power of Demetrius, the son of Antigonos, and after the death of Cassander forced to withdraw into Egypt, he was there received with great favour and honour by Ptolemy Soter, and became one of his chief counsellors. He dissuaded the king from making any of his sons copartner with him in the kingdom, and (c) told him the inconvenience of it; but we do not perceive from Laertius, or any other historian, that he any ways opposed the succession of Philadelphus. The king indeed did not follow his advice in this particular; but still we find him in great favour and request at court, both with the father and son: and therefore, if, after the sons accession, he fell into some disgrace, (whatever the occasion of it might be) it is but supposing, either that this misfortune befel him some years after the king's accession, or that he, after a short disgrace, was restored to favour again; and then we may allow him space enough (without any disparagement to his character) to have at one and the same time both the direction of the Septuagint version, and the superintendency of the royal library. For whatever some may think of the servile employment of looking after books, it is very well known (d) that at Rome, one of the prime cardinals always holds the office of librarian to the pope; and as to the king's library in France, it is not long since the archbishop of Rheims,

(a) *Prideaux's Connection*, Anno 260.

(b) *Ibid.* Anno 250.

† Aristeas, Aristobulus, and Philo say, that the law only was translated by the LXX, and Josephus, in the Preface to his Antiquities, expressly tells us, that they did not translate for Ptolemy the whole Scriptures, but the law only.

†² In acknowledgment of his just government, the

Athenians erected for him as many statues in their city as there were days in the year, which was the greatest honour that ever was done to any citizen in that place. *Diog. Laertius in vita Demetrii Phalerii*, and *Diodor. Sicul. lib. xviii.*

(c) *Diog. Laertius in Philereo.*

(d) *Prideaux's Connection*, Anno 284.

who is by his place primate of the Gallican church, and first peer of the whole realm, thought it no disparagement to his honour to be appointed to the same office.

From Joseph.
lib. xiii. c. 19.
to the end of
lib. xv.

It is natural to suppose that a prince, who himself was a man of great learning, and had always a long train of learned men about him, should be for making some trial of the abilities of the Jewish interpreters, before he set them about the work; and therefore, if the questions which the king made, and the answers which the interpreters returned, be but adapted to their respective circumstances, instead of being an argument against, they will prove a confirmation of the truth of the account which Josephus gives us of this transaction. Now, whoever looks into these questions and answers as they are set down in *Aristeas*, will find that the former (which are said to have been suggested by *Demetrius*) are chiefly philosophical, such as savour of the musæum or college of learned men, that had lately been erected at Alexandria; (a) such as became an inquisitive heathen philosopher, who, in a great measure, was grown weary of the gross polytheism and idolatry of the Egyptians, and, by his conversation with the Alexandrian Jews, more inclinable to the belief of that one invisible and true God whom they worshipped; and that the latter are every one made with such a distinct regard to God and his Providence, as is always uppermost both in the words and writings of every wise and religious Jew.

The character which *Appian* (b) gives us of *Ptolemy Philadelphus* is, that he was the most splendid and magnificent of all the kings of his time in expending his money; and therefore we may less wonder at his giving so much for the redemption of the captive Jews (c), when we find him bestowing upon *Aratus* the Sicyonian, for his having been serviceable to him in the collection of some books and pictures, the sum of an hundred and fifty talents, to adjust the properties, and settle the peace of his city; (d) may less wonder at his sending away the Jewish interpreters so amply rewarded, when we find him presenting the Roman ambassadors every one of them with a crown of gold, and, upon their taking their leave, heaping upon them gifts of inestimable value; may less wonder, in short, at his profusion in this particular, when we find him (e) (as *Athenæus* assures us) spending two thousand two hundred talents in one pompous festival to *Bacchus*.

His own inclination, (f) prompted by *Demetrius Phalareus*, led him to be prodigiously fond of the most complete and authentic copies of any curious book. Fifteen talents he gave for such copies of the tragedies of *Æschylus*, *Sophocles*, and *Euripides*, and yet these were already written in Greek, and needed no translation; (g) whereas the bare permission of a version of the Jewish law (that nation's peculiar and inestimable treasure) was a favour that had never been asked before, and what, upon any common application, would probably have been denied: And as the authenticity of this version must entirely depend on the skill and faithfulness of the Jewish translators (since they were the only persons that understood the Hebrew language), the king had no other way to obtain a confidence herein, than by gaining the entire good opinion of the high priest and people of the Jews.

Upon the whole, therefore, we may conclude, that though the sums bestowed upon the Jews upon account of this translation be very large, yet, considering the king's vast liberality upon other occasions, the objection would have been stronger had the sums been less; since, upon the highest computation, his whole expence in redeeming the captives, in presents to the temple and altar, and in rewards to the interpreters and high priest, being all put together, does not amount to so much as he spent in one festival to *Bacchus*.

(a) *Whiston's Defence of Aristeas*.
(d) *Living* xiv. *Eutropius*, lib. ii. *Diog.*
de *Aristea*.

(b) *In Prefat. ad Opera Hist.*
(e) *Laertius* in *Strato*.
(g) *Whiston's Defence of Aristeas*.

(c) *Plutarch* in *Arato*.
(f) *Van Dale's Dissert.*

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In so great and pompous a court as this of Philadelphus must needs have been, we need not be solicitous to answer the objection of his being addressed to by way of letter or memorial, even by persons that had otherwise a constant access to him; because, in matters of great importance, this, in most courts, is the common method of proceeding even now. But this we may safely add, that how warmly soever some modern critics have attacked the history of this Septuagint version, yet the ancient testimonies of such authors as have made mention of it, viz. of Alexander Polyhistor (*a*), a learned heathen, who was greatly inquisitive about the affairs of the Jews; of Aristobulus, the peripatetic philosopher, and tutor to Ptolemy Philopater; of Philo, who lived at Alexandria, the very place where this version was made; of Tertullian, one of the most accurate writers of Christian antiquity; of Eusebius, a learned and faithful ecclesiastical historian; of St Jerom, a vehement enemy to this very version, as compared with the Hebrew copy; and of several others that might be produced, are a confirmation of what Josephus (a priest of that very temple, to which the presents from Philadelphus were sent) relates concerning it, and such strong holds and fastnesses, as the maintainers of its antiquity have not yet been prevailed upon to give up *.

DISSERTATION V.

OF THE PROFANE HISTORY DURING THIS PERIOD.

MOST of the historical facts in profane authors, that had any relation to the Sacred Records, we have, in the course of this history, endeavoured to abridge and reduce into notes, at their proper periods; and have nothing more now to do, but only to take notice of some extraordinary and remarkable events in the Persian, Grecian, and Roman empires, down to our Saviour's time, which did not then so properly fall in with our design.

After the dissolution of the ancient Assyrian monarchy, by the death of Sardanapalus, there arose up two lesser empires in its stead; one founded by Arbaces, governor of Media, and the other by Belesis, governor of Babylon, the two principal commanders who headed the conspiracy, whereby the former empire was brought to an end.

Arbaces (who in Scripture (*b*) is called Tiglath Pileser) had the larger share of the empire, and therefore fixed his seat at Nineveh, where the former Assyrian kings used to have their residence, and there governed his new-erected empire for nineteen years. He was succeeded by his son Salmanassar; Salmanassar by Senacherib; Senacherib by Esarhaddon; Esarhaddon by Suosduchinus (in (*c*) the book of Judith called Nabuchodonosor); Suosduchinus by Chyniladanus; Chyniladanus by Nabopolassar; and Nabopolassar by his son Nebuchadnezzar the Great, of whom we have said so many things; Nebuchadnezzar the Great was succeeded by his son Evilmerodach; Evilmerodach by Neroglissor; and Neroglissor by Belshazzar; in whom the united empire of the Assyrians and Babylonians terminated.

Belesis (who in Scripture is called (*d*) Baladan) took up his residence at Babylon, and was succeeded by his son Merodach; but who were his successors we have no account

(*a*) *Whiston's Defence of Aristeas*,
of this Book, Note *.]
(*d*) Isaiah xxxix. 1.

* [On the subject of the Septuagint version, see page 584,
(*b*) 2 Kings xv. 29. and xvi. 7. 10.

(*c*) Judith i. 2.

to be depended on, only we know, that Esarhaddon, king of Assyria, conquered the kingdom of Babylon, and that he and his successors Suosduchinus and Chyniladanus possessed it, until Nabopolassar, governor of Babylon, and general of the Assyrian forces, joining his arms with Astyages, the son of Cyaxares king of Media, slew Chyniladanus, took and destroyed Nineveh, and translated the empire to Babylon.

From Joseph.
lib. xiii. c. 19.
to the end of
lib. xv.

After the terrible blow which Sennacherib's forces received in Judea, the Medes, understanding in what a low condition he was returned to Nineveh, immediately shook off his yoke, and made Dejoces (who in Scripture is called Arphaxad) their king; who, having beautified and enlarged Ecbatana, made it the royal seat of his kingdom, and there reigned for fifty three years. He was succeeded by his son Phraortes; Phraortes by Cyaxares I.; Cyaxares I. by Astyages; Astyages by Cyaxares II. called in Scripture Darius the Mede, who conquered Belshazzar, and began to lay the foundation of the Persian monarchy, which during his life was called the empire of the Medes and Persians, but after his death was united by Cyrus*.

Cyrus succeeding his father Cambyses in the kingdom of Persia, and his uncle Cyaxares in the kingdom of the Medes and empire of Babylon, by this means founded the second great monarchy, which was the Persian. His wars with the Assyrians, his defeat of Cræsus king of Lydia, his wonderful taking of Babylon, and obliging all the East to submit to his power, are subjects that we have already touched upon, either in our history or notes: But there are some things in his war with the Scythians (might we but credit their story) that justly deserve our observation.

(a) At the time when he made his expedition into Scythia, Tomyris was queen thereof, a woman of great courage and bravery of mind; for though she could have hindered Cyrus's army from passing the river Araxes, she permitted them to do it, in confidence of fighting them with more advantage within her own dominions, and of making their retreat more difficult by their having the river on their backs. Cyrus took this opportunity to pass the river, and having marched a little into the country and pitched his camp, the next day he abandoned it, as if he had fled for fear, leaving plenty of wine and other provisions behind him. Tomyris, having intelligence of this, sent her son, with the third part of her forces, in pursuit of the enemy; but when he came to their camp, as if he had been sent to a banquet, not a battle, he suffered his men (who were strangers to that kind of liquor) to intoxicate themselves with wine to such a degree, that when Cyrus marched his army back again in the night-time, and came upon them, he found them incapable of fighting or of making any resistance, and therefore put them all to the sword.

Upon the loss of so great an army, and (what more nearly concerned her) the loss of her only son, Tomyris did not betake herself to tears, the usual refuge of women upon such occasions, but cast about in her mind how she might revenge herself of the enemy; which in a short time she did by the like stratagem, and with the like success. For observing that the Persians were now grown secure by reason of their late victory, she retired before them with her army, as if she had been afraid to venture the decision of a battle, until she had drawn Cyrus unawares into a defile, where, having placed an ambuscade in the mountains, she killed two hundred thousand of his men, (insomuch that there was not one left to carry home the news), and himself upon the spot. Thus fell this great prince, in the seventieth year of his age, though Xenophon, and from him other historians, are clearly of opinion that he died peaceably in his bed.

* [This series of Assyrian, Babylonian, and Median kings is not perfectly correct. Such parts of it as may seem to affect the credit of the Scripture History have been already corrected in different notes on the preceding books of this work; and those who are

desirous to see the whole adjusted and rendered consistent with itself, and with unquestionable eras, may have recourse to Dr Hales's Analysis of Ancient Chronology.]

(a) Justin, lib. i. c. 8.

† Xenophon adds, (lib. viii.) that finding his death

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He was succeeded by his son Cambyzes, and Cambyzes by the Magian, who, under the false name of Smerdis *, usurped the throne, and brought discredit upon the whole sect, until its character came to be restored again by the management and reformation of Zoroastres.

At what time this Zoroastres (or Zardusht as the Persians call him) lived, there is a wide difference both among the Greek and oriental writers; since some of them will have it, that he lived many years before the flood, others in the days of Abraham, and others again not before the reign of Darius the son of Hystaspes. Moses (according to the sentiments of several learned men) speaks of the pyræa, or temple consecrated to the worship of fire, when he brings in God threatening the Israelites (a), to "overthrow their high places, and destroy their chaminim, or places appointed for the worship of fire, and to cast their carcasses upon the carcasses of their idols †;" though they are cer-

approaching, he called his nobility together, his two sons, Cambyzes and Tanaoxares, to his bed side, and after a long speech concerning the immortality of the soul, and the rewards or punishments consequent upon every man's good or ill conduct in this life, he exhorted his sons by the strongest arguments to a perpetual concord and agreement, and uttered many other things, which make it not improbable, that he received the knowledge of the true God from Daniel, when he governed Shushan in Persia. Strabo assures us, (lib. xv.) that he was buried in a city called Pasagardes, which himself had built, and where his monument, even at this time, was with this inscription, "O vir, quicumque es, et undecunque advenis, neque enim te adventurum ignoravi: Ego sum Cyrus, qui Persis imperium constitui; pusillum hoc terræ, quo meum tegitur corpus, mihi ne invid eas." This very tomb, Alexander the Great (according to Q. Curtius) opened, either in hopes of some treasure, which he imagined might have been there deposited, or with a desire rather to do honour to his remains; for so we are told, that he caused the coffin wherein his body lay to be covered with his own garment, and a crown of gold to be set upon it: All which gives credit to the account we have in Xenophon, but derogates not a little from Herodotus, who leaves his body in the hand of Tomyris. *Raleigh's Hist.* book iii. chap. 6. [The whole story of the invasion of Scythia by Cyrus is rejected as false by Dr Hales, who produces, from *Scripture*, the *Persian writers*, *Xenophon*, and others, such evidence in support of his own opinion, that Cyrus, far from being a mad conqueror thirsting for blood, was revered as the father of his people, as is much more than sufficient to counterbalance the testimony of Herodotus and Justin. "Herodotus viewed Cyrus with aversion as the enslaver of his country. And this antipathy biassed an historian, elsewhere so candid and impartial, to prefer a worse account before the better, of which he was not ignorant, and which was afterwards furnished by *Xenophon*, tacitly vindicating the character of his hero from the aspersions of Herodotus."—"The Persian writers relate, that after a long and bloody war *Khesru* (*Cyrus*) subdued the empire of *Turen*, and made the city of *Balk*, in *Choresen*, a royal residence, to keep in order his new subjects; that he repaid every family in *Persia* the amount of their war taxes, out of the

immense spoils that he had acquired by his conquests; that he endeavoured to promote peace and harmony between the *Turenians* and *Irenians*; that he regulated the pay of his soldiers, reformed civil and religious abuses throughout the provinces; and at length, after a long and glorious reign, resigned his crown to his son *Lohoresch* (Cambyzes), and retired to solitude, saying, that *he had lived long enough for his own glory, and that it was now time to devote the remainder of his days to God.*" That Cyrus was a *Monotheist*; that he was well acquainted with the prophet Daniel; and that the God whom he worshipped was the LORD, THE GOD OF HEAVEN, who had given to him all the kingdoms of the earth, and charged him (as he said himself) to build Him a house at Jerusalem, there seems to be no room for doubt. See *Analysis of Ancient Chronology*, vol. 3. p. 106, &c.]

* [*Smerdis* does not appear to have been a false name, for the Magian was certainly called *Smerdis* as well as the second son of Cyrus, whose throne the Magian usurped. Of this we have very complete proof. Among the many mad exploits of Cambyzes was the assassination of his brother, because he had dreamed of the advancement of *Smerdis* to the Persian throne. When he afterwards learned that *Smerdis Magus* had personated his brother and excited a revolt in Persia, he bitterly lamented his error in destroying his brother *Smerdis*; "for it was *Smerdis* the Magian, said he, that the demon (ὁ δαίμων) foretold, in vision, should rise up against me;" but this remark he could not have made, had not his brother and the Magian had the same name. *Herod.* lib. iii. c. 65.]

(a) Ezek. vi. 4, &c.

† [That the worship of the sun—the source of light and heat, was more ancient than Moses there can be no doubt; but that the worship of the element of fire or of fires burning on earth was more ancient can never be proved by this text of Ezekiel. They were the idolatrous Jews of his own age that the prophet thus addressed in the name of Jehovah; and they certainly had *idols* or *images*—perhaps indeed images of the sun—which the prophet assured them should be broken; but the Persian worshippers of *fire* or *light* allowed no other images of their god. No ground therefore is furnished by this text from which an argument can be drawn to ascertain the era of Zoroaster.]

tainly mistaken who think that the fire, which he ordered to be kept always burning upon the altar of the Lord, was in imitation of the fire of the Magians.

From Joseph.
lib. xiii. c. 19.
to the end of
lib. xv.

If then we suppose that Zoroastres was the first author of the worship of fire, we must acknowledge him more ancient than Moses; but if we look upon him only as the reformer or restorer of it, (though we cannot tell the precise time when he flourished), it must not be long after the Magians fell into disgrace, and may therefore very properly be thought to be in the reign of Darius Hystaspes.

He was a man of a mean and obscure parentage; † by birth and education very probably a Jew, and, as some suppose, a servant to the prophet Daniel; because he was certainly a man of great learning, and thoroughly acquainted with the books of Moses. As soon as he took upon him the prophetic office, he retired into a cave, and there lived a long time as a recluse, pretending to be abstracted from all worldly considerations, and to be given wholly to prayers and divine meditations. In this retirement he composed the book †² wherein all his pretended revelations are contained. (a) The first part of it consists of a liturgy, which the Magians, in all their oratories and fire-temples, make use of to this day. The rest is an historical account of the life, actions, and prophecies of its author, the several articles and branches of his superstition, together with rules and exhortations to morality, wherein he is very pressing and exact, except his allowing of incest; and the whole being interspersed with several things taken out of the Old Testament, abundantly shews that his original was from the Jews.

Upon leaving his retirement, he went into India among the Brachmans, where, having learned all their knowledge in mathematics, astronomy, and natural philosophy, he came back, and taught his disciples these sciences, which gained them so great a reputation, that, for many years after, a learned man and a magian became equivalent terms. Nay, he pretended, that, once upon a time, he was taken up into heaven to be instructed in those doctrines which he was to deliver unto men; that there he heard God speak out of the midst of a great and bright flame of fire; and for this reason he taught his followers, that fire was the truest representation of the Divine Presence, and

† To this purpose we may observe, that most of his reformati-
ons in the old religion of the Magians are taken either from the ancient writings, or the ancient usages of the Jews. For, whereas Moses heard God speak to him out of a "flame of fire in the bush;" Zoroastres pretended, that he in like manner heard God speak to him at the time when he was taken up into heaven. Whereas the Jews had a visible Shechinah of the Divine Presence among them, resting over the mercy seat in the holy of holies, unto which they turned themselves when they prayed; Zoroastres taught his disciples, that in the sun, and in the sacred fires in their temples, God more especially dwelt, and therefore he obliged them to offer up all their prayers with their faces turned to both these. Whereas the Jews had a sacred fire, which came down from heaven upon their altar of burnt-offerings, which, as long as Solomon's temple stood, was preserved with the utmost care from extinguishing; Zoroastres pretended, that, when he was in heaven, he brought some of that holy fire out of which God spake unto him, and therefore he enjoined, that it should be kept with diligent care, and that all the fires, on the altars of new erected fire-temples, should at first be lighted only from thence; And whereas the Jews were very nice in using no wood on the altar of their temple, but what was reputed clean, and had it therefore all barked and examined before it was laid on, and, when it was laid

on, allowed of no bellows to blow it, but left it to kindle and flame out of itself; Zoroastres ordained his followers, in relation to the sacred fire of their temples, to observe both these particulars, commanding them to bark all their wood, and use no other means for the kindling it up into a flame, but the pouring oil, and leaving it to the blasts of the open air: And that he should, in so many singular and unobvious things, imitate the Jewish religion in the scheme of his reformati-
ons, it can hardly be imagined, without supposing that at first he had his education in it; nor is it improbable, that if, as some think, he was the disciple of Daniel, his seeing that great and good man arrive to such an height of dignity, by being a true prophet of God, might put him upon the thoughts of being a false one, in hopes that, if he acted his part well, he might obtain to himself the like advancement. *Light-foot's Temple-Service, Hyde's Religio veterum Persarum, and Prideaux's Connection, Anno 486.*

†² This book is called *Zendavesta*, and by contraction *Zend*, which signifies a *fire-kindler*, such as a tinder-box is with us; and this fantastical name the impostor gave it, because, as he pretended, all that would read this book, and meditate thereon, might from thence kindle in their hearts the fire of all true love for God and his holy religion. *Prideaux's Connection, Anno 486.*

(a) *Prideaux's Connection, Anno 486.*

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the sun (as the most perfect fire) the more immediate throne of his glory; that of the fire from whence God spake, he upon his return brought some with him, and placed it on the altar of the first fire-temple which he erected; from whence, as they say, it was propagated to all the rest; and this is the reason they give for keeping it so carefully, and treating it with so much superstition.

Having thus qualified himself to be a prophet, he made his first appearance in Media, in the city of Ziz, say some, or in Ecbatana (now Tauris), according to others; where the principal doctrines that he professed (as a refinement upon what the old Magians maintained) were these,—“That there was one *Supremè Being*, independent, and self-existing from all eternity; that under him there were two angels, one the angel of light, who is the author and director of all good, and the other the angel of darkness, who is the author and director of all evil, and that these two, out of the mixture of light and darkness, made all things; that they are in perpetual struggle with each other, and that where the angel of light prevails, there the most is good, where the angel of darkness, there the most is evil; that this struggle shall continue unto the end of the world, when there shall be a general resurrection, a day of judgment, and a retribution to every one according to his works; and that after this, the angel of darkness and his disciples shall go into a world of their own, where they shall suffer, in everlasting darkness, the punishments of their evil deeds; and the angel of light and his disciples shall go also into a world of their own, where they shall receive, in everlasting light, the reward due unto their good deeds; whereupon they shall remain separated for ever, and light and darkness are to be no more mixed together to all eternity.” And all this, the remainder of that sect (which is now in Persia and India) do, after so many ages, still hold without any variation even to this day.

After Zoroastres had acted the part of a prophet in Media, and there settled all things according to his intentions, he removed from thence into Bactria, the most eastern province of Persia, and there settling in the city of Balch (which lies on the river Oxus, in the confines of Persia), under the protection of Hystaspes, the father of Darius, he soon spread his imposture through all that province with success. From Bactria he went next to the royal court at Susa, where he managed his pretensions with so much address and insinuation, that he made Darius likewise a proselyte, and, from his example, drew over the courtiers, nobility, and great men of that city into the same profession: But when, upon his return into Balch, he attempted the like upon Agarsp, king of the Oriental Scythians, and a zealous Sabian, and pretended an authority from Darius to that purpose, the Scythian prince resented it with such indignation, that he invaded Bactria with an army, and having there defeated the forces that opposed him, slew Zoroastres, with all the priests of his patriarchal church, amounting to the number of eighty persons, and demolished all the fire-temples * in the province: but it was not long before Darius fell upon him, and revenged the injury †.

* After he had overthrown him with a great slaughter, and drove him out of the province, he rebuilt all the fire temples, and especially that of Balch, which, as it was the patriarchal temple of the sect, he failed not to erect with a grandeur suitable to its dignity, and had it called after his own name. For he was a zealous promoter of this religion, and, after the death of its author, continued to propagate it with the same ardour as before. *Prideaux's Connection*, Anno 486.

† [According to Dr Hales there were two Zoroastres—the former contemporary with Abraham, and king of Bactria; the latter a disciple of the prophet Daniel, who flourished in the reign of Darius Hystaspes. Of the religion taught by the former, he speaks in terms of the highest praise, as a sublime system of

pure theism, similar to the religion of Abraham and the other patriarchs of the Old Testament; and the object of the teaching of the latter, was to bring back the religion of Persia to its original purity, by expunging from it the corruptions which had been introduced into it from Zebism. All this seems to be very probable; but what the modern Persian writers, together with Abulfaragi, say of his foretelling the *precise time* of the birth of a Divine Child in Palestine, and his doctrine of the *resurrection of the dead*, and a future state of rewards and punishments, much more perspicuous than any thing on the subject that is to be found in the Old Testament, is unquestionably a legend forged since the general propagation of Christianity. This led Warburton to deny the very

This Darius was one of the seven lords who slew the false Smerdis; and by an artifice he obtained the kingdom of Persia ‡; but it was by the cruel policy of Zopyrus that he made himself master of the city of Babylon. This city having for many years, during the Babylonish empire, been mistress of the East, and domineered over all its neighbouring countries, could not bear the subjection it was fallen under to the Persians; especially since the removal of the imperial seat to Shushan, whereby its wealth and grandeur were much diminished. Taking the advantage therefore of the late revolution which had happened in the Persian empire, the Babylonians resolved to set up for themselves, and, accordingly, having stored the city with a sufficient quantity of arms and provisions, in the fifth year of the reign of king Darius they broke out into an open revolt.

From Joseph.
lib. xiii. c. 19.
to the end of
lib. xv.

(a) The city, by reason of the strength and height of its walls, was impregnable against all storms, batteries, and assaults; and as it was furnished with provisions for a great many years, and had large quantities of void ground within the walls, from whence it might annually be supplied with more, could never have been starved into a surrender, but must have worn out Darius and all his army, had it not been for a stratagem of Zopyrus, one of his commanders.

The army had now lain before the city a year and eight months, without having made any great progress in the siege, which raised the indignation of Zopyrus to such a degree, that having cut off his nose and ears, and mangled his body all over with stripes, in this condition he fled to the besieged, and feigning to them that he had suffered all this by the cruel usage of Darius, he thereby insinuated himself so far into their confidence, that at length they made him the chief commander of their forces, which trust he made use of to deliver the city (which could not otherwise have been taken) into his master's hand; and for this remarkable piece of service was rewarded with the highest honours that his prince could heap on him all his life after.

By this hardy stratagem Darius recovered the city of Babylon; but in his war with the Grecians he was so far from having any good success, that (b) at the battle of Marathon, his vast army received a total overthrow by Miltiades, prince of the Thracian Chersonesus, and his two generals, Dotis and Artaphernes, were forced to return home with baffle and disgrace.

He was succeeded by his son Xerxes, who, (c) after ten years preparation, renewed

existence of the second Zoroaster, and to treat with contempt, as a set of *fablers*, all the Persian writers by whom he is mentioned; but this was surely going too far. That the *Sedder* and *Zendviste* are unworthy of the Persian reformer, or of regard, is indeed true; but, as Dr Hales well observes, the rejection of such spurious productions as well as of the legends of *Albufaragi* and others, by no means invalidates the actual existence of such a reformer of the Magian religion, as *Zerdusht* or the younger *Zoroaster*; for what ancient teacher of religion has there been, of whom fables have not been told in the course of ages? In all probability Zoroaster himself never pretended to have gone to heaven for the sacred fire, of which he may have conceived the idea from Daniel's account of the sacred fire among the Jews.]

‡ [“ This tale of *Herodotus* and *Justin* is extremely improbable. For what men of sense, (in which Darius certainly was not deficient), would wish to attribute his success to a friend? which could only provoke his competitors, and lessen his character in the eyes of the nations. *Eschylus*, the predecessor of *Herodotus*, gave a different, and much more probable

account. He stated, that the conspirators against Smerdis governed in rotation; first *Maraphis*, who is not found in the list of *Herodotus*; and next *Artaphernes*, whom *Herodotus* calls *Intaphernes*; then *Darius*, who was possessed of superior abilities and spirit of enterprise, (in which even *Herodotus* represents him as exceeding the rest, and compelling them to a prompt execution of their plan, by the threat of informing against them if they delayed;) he was also of the *Achæmenian* or royal line (for he reckoned among his ancestors, *Arsemis*, *Arinnis*, *Teispeus*, *Cyrus*, *Cambyses*, *Teispeus*, *Achæmenes*;) his father *Hystaspes* was governor of *Persia*, the first province of the empire; and he had himself served in the Egyptian wars under *Cambyses*. Upon all these accounts, therefore, when the government came to his turn, he naturally and easily continued to retain the possession of it for himself, and to transmit to his posterity.” *Hales's Analysis*, &c. vol. iii. p. 133.]

(a) *Prideaux's Connection*, Anno 516.

(b) *Herod.* lib. vi. *Justin*, lib. ii. c. 9.

(c) *Herod.* lib. ii. *Diod. Sic.* lib. ii.

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the war with the Grecians, but with worse success than his father : for at the streights of Thermophylæ, Leonidas, the king of the Lacedemonians, with an handful of men, slew twenty thousand of his forces : at the streights of Salamis, Themistocles, the general of the Athenians, ruined the greatest part of his fleet : in Sicily, Gelo, the king thereof, made great havoc among his confederates the Carthaginians : at Platea, Pausanias slew his general Mardonius, and cut his army to pieces ; and at Mycale, Leoty-chides both vanquished his troops by land, and burnt the remainder of his fleet ; so that never was there a man who set out with so great an armament, both by sea and land, and returned in so abject and disgraceful a manner. He was succeeded by his son Artaxerxes ; Artaxerxes by Xerxes II ; Xerxes II. by his brother Sogdianus ; and Sogdianus by his brother Ochus, who is commonly called Darius Nothus. Ochus was succeeded by Artaxerxes II. surnamed Mnemon ; Artaxerxes II. by another Ochus, who took upon him the name of Artaxerxes III ; this Ochus by Arses ; and Arses by Darius Codomannus ; in whom the Persian monarchy, terminating by Alexander the Great, was translated to Greece.

The army which Alexander carried into Asia, according to the highest computation, amounted to no more than thirty thousand foot and five thousand horse ; and yet with these few forces, he not only attempted, but accomplished likewise the conquest of the whole Persian empire, and added India likewise to his acquisitions : but what was the most remarkable thing in his expedition is,—that he set out upon it with no more than seventy talents, which was scarce enough to supply the army with necessaries for thirty days ; but as he trusted in Providence, Providence did not fail him. In a few days, at the river Granicus, he encountered Darius, and having vanquished his troops, though they were five times more in number, he thereby got possession of a great part of his treasure, and all the provinces of the Lesser Asia. Not long after this, at Issus in Cilicia, he gave him another defeat ; where, having taken all his camp, bag and baggage, with his mother, wife, and children, he left an hundred thousand Persians dead upon the field of battle : and about two years after, not far from Arbela, he gave him a final overthrow ; for there, with no more than fifty thousand men, he vanquished the vast army of the Persians, which consisted of above twenty times as many, and thereby determined the fate of the Persian, and established the third great monarchy, which was the Grecian, in the person of Alexander. It lasted no longer than six years and ten months : for, after his death, it was divided among his generals ; and as Judea lay between Syria and Egypt, according as their arms prevailed, it was generally under the dominion of one of these, until the Roman power began to exert itself.

The Romans, having built their city, and out of the neighbouring villages (*a*) (as we related the story before) furnished themselves with wives, for seven successions lived under the dominion of kings ; but in the family of Tarquin, which had † justly incur-

(*a*) Vide page 473 of this Vol.

† To make his way to the throne, he murdered his father-in-law Servius Tullius, and, upon his ascending it, put all his friends to death. The affairs of the state he managed by himself alone, slighted the senate, diminished their authority, cut off several of them upon frivolous pretences, and seized upon their estates. Among these Marcus Junius was one, who left behind him a son named Lucius Junius ; but he, fearing the fate that his father and brother had undergone, counterfeited the fool (and was thence called Brutus) so very artfully, that he was taken by Tarquin into his house to make his children sport. In the mean time, Sextus, one of Tarquin's sons, inflamed with the beauty of Lucretia, got privately to Collatia, where she resided, and ravished her ; where-

upon she sent for her father from Rome, and her husband Collatinus from the camp, (which was then before Ardea) desiring them to bring along with them some of their particular friends. Publius Valerius came with her father Lucretius, and Lucius Junius Brutus with her husband ; to whom, as soon as they were arrived, she related the whole story, and then with a poinard stabbed herself to the heart. Upon the sight of this they were all filled with grief and indignation ; but, to their great surprise, Brutus, throwing off the disguise of his folly, declared his resolution, and made them swear upon the bloody poinard to assist him in revenging this, and the other wickednesses of Tarquin and his family, by expelling him and them from the government ; which accordingly they did, thereby putting an end to the regal power

red the people's displeasure, that form of government was quite dissolved. Many, however, and fierce were the wars which, both in their regal and consular state, the Romans waged with the nations round about them; but their conquests were confined to the bounds of Italy only; nor was the glory of their name much known to foreign nations, until the war which they had with Pyrrhus, king of Epirus, gave them an opportunity * to signalize their bravery and greatness of mind, which excited Ptolemy Philadelphus, then king of Egypt, to send them an embassy, congratulating their successes, and desiring to enter into alliance with them.

From Joseph.
lib. xiii. c. 19.
to the end of
lib. xv.

(a) To make a return of the like respects, the Romans next year sent Q. Fabius Gurges, Cn. Fabius Pictor, and Q. Ogulinus, their ambassadors to the Egyptian court: whose behaviour in that capacity was very remarkable; for when the king, having invited them to supper, in the conclusion of the entertainment presented each of them with a crown of gold, they accepted of the crowns upon account of the honour that was done them, but next morning they crowned therewith the statues of the king that stood in the public places of the city; and when again, at their audience of leave, he presented them with very valuable gifts, they took them indeed for fear that their refusal should give offence, but as soon as they were returned to Rome, they delivered them all into the public treasury, before they appeared in the senate to give an account of their embassy; whereby they declared, that they desired no other advantage from the service of the public than the honour of discharging it well.

This spirit of moderation and disinterestedness, while it continued in the state, and the many great instances of invincible courage and resolution which upon all occasions they shewed, made the Romans of great note in the world, and after the defeat of the Carthaginians, in the second punic war, they became indeed the terror of all other nations.

Hannibal was certainly the most dangerous enemy that ever Rome had. As soon as war was declared between these two states he left Spain, where he then was, and, at the head of fifty thousand foot and nine thousand horse, marched directly towards Italy. He crossed the Pyrenæan mountains into Gaul, crossed the Rhone, and came to the foot of the Alps, which, in fifteen days time, he got over, but not without much danger and difficulty, as well as the loss of half his army. When he got footing in Italy, he defeated Scipio, one of the Roman consuls, at Pavia, and his colleague Sempronius in

at Rome, and turning it into a consular state. *Hearne's System*, lib. iii.

* One great instance of this appeared in the course of this war, which is thus related by Plutarch:—When Fabricius was consul, and at the head of his army, an unknown person came into the camp, and delivered him a letter from king Pyrrhus's chief physician, offering to take him off by poison, and so end the war without any farther hazard to the Romans, if he might have a reward proportionable to his service. Fabricius, enraged at the villany of the man, and disposing the other consul to the same opinion, sent dispatches immediately to Pyrrhus to caution him against the treason. His letter was to this effect:

“Caius Fabricius and Quintus Æmilius, consuls of the Romans, to Pyrrhus the king, health.

“You seem to have a very ill judgment both of your friends and enemies. You will understand by this letter which was sent to us, that you are in war with honest men, and trust knaves and villains: But we

have not discovered this to you to insinuate into your favour, but lest your ruin might bring a reproach upon us, as if we had ended this war by treachery, when we were not able to do it by our courage and virtue.”

When Pyrrhus had read the letter, and made strict enquiry into the treason, he caused the physician to be executed, and, in acknowledgment of this civility of the Romans, sent to Rome the prisoners without ransom, and again employed Cineas to negotiate a peace for him. The Romans, who were above receiving from their enemy a recompence for not having been guilty of the vilest injustice, disdained to accept of the prisoners without returning to him an equal number of Samnites and Tarentines; but as for the peace, they would not suffer Cineas so much as to mention it, until Pyrrhus had removed his arms and forces out of Italy, and sailed back to Epirus in the same ships that brought him over. *Plutarch in Pyrrho*.

(a) *Livy*, lib. xiv. *Eutropius*, lib. ii. *Valerius Maximus*, lib. iv.

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another action near Trebia. Near the lake Thrasymene he cut off the Roman army, and their consul Flaminius, even after he had destroyed a detachment of forty thousand, which the other consul Servilius had sent to his assistance; but in the famous battle at Cannæ he made the greatest slaughter of them; for therein he defeated their whole army, and slew Æmilius, one of their consuls; killed 50,000 men, two quæstors, 21 tribunes, 80 of the senatorian, and of the equestrian order a much greater number.

This last defeat caused a dreadful consternation in Rome, but did not rebate the people's courage, which still refused to hearken to any overtures of peace, till, having sent Scipio the Younger into Africa, they by that means gave the Carthaginians so much disturbance, that they were forced to recal Hannibal, who, coming to a decisive battle, was routed by the Romans, and his countrymen forced to sue for a peace, which was granted them upon terms very honourable and advantageous to Rome.

After this peace with the Romans, Hannibal (a) lived quietly at Carthage for the space of six years; but being under a suspicion of holding correspondence with Antiochus, surnamed the Great, (between whom and the Romans there was at that time a misunderstanding), and of plotting with him to bring a new war upon Italy, some of his enemies at Rome procured ambassadors to be sent to Carthage in order to enquire into the matter, and if they found any reason for it, to have him delivered into their hands; which when Hannibal understood, he made his escape before the ambassadors had time to deliver their message, and put himself under the protection of Antiochus.

(b) Antiochus at this time was in debate with himself on the point of entering into war with the Romans, but at the coming of Hannibal he soon determined for war; and had he taken Hannibal's advice of carrying it into the bowels of Italy, he might probably have met with a better event; † but his resolution was to begin it in Greece, where, being shamefully defeated in every engagement both by sea and land, he was forced at last to send an embassy to the Roman consuls, desiring conditions of peace; which were granted him upon these hard terms,—That he should pay the whole expences of the war, which were estimated at fifteen thousand talents of Eubæa ||; should quit all Asia on that side the Mount Taurus, and deliver up Hannibal the Carthaginian, and Thoas the Ætolian, as the chief incendiaries of the war. But as soon as these heard that a treaty was begun, they easily foresaw what would be the result of it, and therefore both took care ‡ to get out of the way before it came to a conclusion.

(a) *Livy*, lib. xxxiii. *Cornelius Nepos*, de Hannibale; *Justin*, lib. xxxi. c. 2, 3.

(b) *Livy*, lib. xxxvii. *Justin*, lib. xxxi. c. 8. *Aprian*, de Syriacis.

† Antiochus's army is said to have consisted of seventy thousand foot, twelve thousand horse, and fifty-four elephants, whereas all the Roman forces amounted to no more than thirty thousand, and yet Antiochus was totally overthrown: For in the field of battle he lost fifty thousand foot and four thousand horse; fourteen hundred were taken prisoners, and himself, with much difficulty, escaped to Sardis. *Aprian* in Syriacis; *Livy*, lib. xxxvii. and *Justin*, lib. xxxi. c. 7.

|| There is a difference between *Livy* and *Polybius* in this matter; for whereas in *Polybius* the words are, that the money to be paid the Romans should be ἀργυρίου Ἀττικῶν ἀγίων, *Livy*, mistaking the meaning of the Greek phrase, rendered it of Attick talents; whereas *Polybius* meant it only of the Attick stand-

ard: For as the Eubæan talent was of the greatest weight, so the Attick money was the finest silver of any in Greece, and by this treaty the money was to be paid according to both, i. e. the Romans, having conquered Antiochus, not only obliged him to pay this vast sum for his peace, but also made him pay it in talents of the highest weight, and of silver of the best and finest standard in all Greece. *Prideaux's* Connection, Anno 290.

‡² What became of the Ætolian we are not concerned to enquire, but Hannibal, after that he was deserted by Antiochus, fled to Parthias, king of Bithynia; where, being slighted by him, and in danger of being delivered to the Romans, it is generally said that he put an end to his days; for which purpose he carried poison always about him concealed under the stone of his ring. This is the account we have in *Livy*, lib. xxxix. c. 51. and what *Plutarch* and the Roman satirist does more than allude to.

————— O gloria! vincitur idem,

† Next to the Carthaginian war, the longest and most obstinate that the Romans ever had was the war which Mithridates, king of Pontus, (in the reign of Alexander Jannæus at Jerusalem) waged with them. For having very unjustly seized on the kingdoms of Cappadocia and Bithynia, when the Romans interposed for the surrender of them to the persons to whom they had decreed them, he refused to obey, and there-upon hostilities ensued. (a) For some time at first Mithridates was successful; but * was very cruel while he had the superiority; till, having sent into Greece an army of three hundred and ten thousand men, under the command of three of his best generals, Sylla alone, with no more than fifteen thousand foot and fifteen hundred horse, vanquished them all in several battles; and Fimbria the next year, with another Roman army, pressed Mithridates himself so very close, that in Patana, a maritime town in Ætolia, he was in imminent danger of being made prisoner, (b) which terrified him to such a degree, that he sued for peace; which upon these conditions was granted him, —“ That he should restore Bithynia to Nicomedes, and Cappadocia to Ariobarzanes, and to the Romans whatever he had taken from them in the late war; that he should content himself with the paternal kingdom of Pontus, yield to the Romans seventy of his ships, and pay them three thousand talents for the charges of the war.”

From Joseph.
lib. viii. c. 19.
to the end of
lib. xv.

But the terms of this peace were too hard long to be submitted to by a man of Mithridates's spirit; and therefore, as soon as Nicomedes (who left the Roman people his heirs) was dead, he again seized on Bithynia and Paphlagonia, and the Romans again were forced to declare war against him.

Nempe et in exilium præceps fugit, atque ibi magnus
Mirandusque cliens sedet ad prætoris regis,
Donec Bithyno libeat vigilare tyranno.
Finem animæ, quæ res humanas miscuit olim
Non gladii, non saxa dabunt, non tela, sed ille
Cannarum vindex, ac tanti sanguinis ultor
Annulus, ————— *Juven. Sat. x.*

He was born a soldier; and a continual exercise of arms made him a great captain. He was always just in his schemes and immense in his views: Had an admirable genius at hitting the true means for the execution of his designs, and the greatest artifice in acting without being discovered. He was infinite in expedients, and as skilful in recovering himself out of danger as he was in drawing others into it. But then he was a person of no fidelity, no religion, no humanity, though he had the art of putting on the appearance of all these virtues, whenever he thought it subservient to his interest. [This however is the tale of his enemies, and it is hardly possible to suppose it true. Such a monster of wickedness as Hannibal is here said to have been could not have played the hypocrite so dexterously as to keep together, for seventeen years in an enemy's country, an army of mercenaries of various nations, who could hardly have any other motive to fight than what arose from the love of their leader.] *Veriot's Revolution of the Roman Republic.*

† The war with Jugurtha intervened indeed, but this was not of any long continuance, nor is it any where referred to in the Sacred History; however, it may not be improper to mention thus much of it, — That this Jugurtha was nephew to Micipsa, king of Numidia, who left behind him two sons, Adherbal and Hiempsal, both of whom Jugurtha murdered, and then usurped their kingdom; that when the Romans were

for calling him to an account for all this wickedness, he for a long while bribed the commissioners and generals that were sent against him, till at length, being defeated, first by Metellus, and afterwards by Marius, he was betrayed by Bochus, king of Mauritania, who was both his ally and father-in-law; that being thus betrayed and seized, he was laden with chains, and given up to Sylla, who delivered him into the hands of the general Marius, and he, in the triumph that was given him, dragged him like a slave at the wheels of his chariot; and that, after this ceremony was over, he was led to prison, stripped of his royal robes, and then pushed naked into a dungeon, where he was condemned to be starved to death. *Sallustii Bellum Jugurthinum.*

(a) *Plutarch de Syllâ; Appian in Mithrid. and Vell. Paterc. lib. ii. c. 23.*

* To this purpose historians have observed, that when, upon a defeat given to the Roman forces, he had taken Manlius Aquilius and Quintus Oppius, the two generals prisoners, he not only treated them with the utmost indignity, but afterwards with equal cruelty tortured them to death; and that, finding a great number of Romans and Italians, upon one occasion or other, dispersed through all the provinces and cities of the Lesser Asia, he sent secret orders to all the governors of these provinces, and magistrates of these cities, to put them all to death in one and the same day; which was accordingly executed with such rigour, that no less than eighty thousand (say some) near double that number (say others) of Romans and Italians were then massacred in that country. *Appian in Mithrid. Epit. Livii, lib. lxxvii, lxxviii, and L. Florus, lib. iii. c. 5.*

(b) *Plutarch de Syllâ; Appian in Mithrid. and Vell. Paterculus, lib. ii. c. 23.*

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(a) The two consuls for the year, Lucius Lucullus and Marcus Cotta, were sent to carry on this war; but the latter of these, being no ways skilled in military affairs, was overcome by Mithridates, not far from Chalcedon, with the loss of most of his men and a good part of his fleet which was there to defend the coasts; till Lucullus, coming to his assistance, not only drove Mithridates from the siege of Cyzirus, a city on the Propontis, that was in the Roman interest, but destroyed his fleet in the Hellespont, retook Bithynia and Paphlagonia from him, pursued him into his kingdom, besieged his very capital, and in one engagement ruined all his forces, and compelled him to flee into Armenia, there to implore the protection and assistance of Tigranes his son-in-law.

Nor was this all; for as soon as Lucullus understood that Tigranes was engaged in the war with him, he immediately marched his army against him, passed the Euphrates, passed the Tigris, defeated the forces that were sent against him, and having besieged his metropolis, with not the twentieth part of their number, in one battle gained a complete victory over an army of three hundred and six thousand men that were coming to relieve it. Lucullus, in short, had in every place the advantage against these two confederate kings, (b) until, by the management of Publius Clodius, his own soldiers began to mutiny against him, insomuch that, having lost all the power and authority of a general, he was forced to deliver up the army to Pompey, and return to Rome.

Pompey, at his first entering upon the war, had taken into alliance with him Phraortes, king of Parthia; but the mutiny which had happened in the latter end of Lucullus's time had given Mithridates an opportunity of recovering a good part of his kingdom, and of getting together a great number of forces, wherewith he endeavoured to harass and distress the Roman army, till Pompey at length fell upon him by surprise, vanquished his troops, made him flee for shelter northward beyond the springs of the Euphrates, and then marched directly against his confederate Tigranes: But Tigranes, terrified at this, and not sufficiently provided to resist the power that was coming against him, was resolved to surrender both himself and his kingdom into the hands of the Roman general; who, upon his paying the Romans six thousand talents for making a causeless war against them, and yielding up to them all his conquests on this side the Euphrates, ordered that he should still reign in his paternal kingdom of Armenia the Greater, and his son † in Gordena and Sophena, two provinces that bordered upon it.

(c) In the mean time Mithridates, having passed through several Scythian nations, came at last into the Cimmerian Bosphorus, (now the country of the Crim Tartars) which was part of his dominions, and where he had appointed one of his sons, called Machares *, to reign. From hence he sent ambassadors to Pompey, offering in his be-

(a) *Plutarch* de Lucullo, and *Appian* de Mithrid.

(b) *Plutarch* de Lucullo et Pompeio, and *Dion Cassius*, lib. xxxvi.

† The reason why Pompey made this partition of Tigranes's kingdom, was because Tigranes's son had put himself under the protection of the Romans. The father Tigranes had three sons by Cleopatra, the daughter of Mithridates, two of whom he had, upon light occasions, put to death, and therefore this third, not thinking his life safe within the power of so cruel a father, fled to Phraortes, king of Parthia, whose daughter he had married, and by him was assisted to invade his father's dominions, and lay siege to Artaxata his capital city; but being routed by Tigranes the father, and drove out of the country, he betook himself to the Roman camp, and there, by way of a

suppliant, cast himself at the feet of Pompey. Pompey at first received him very kindly; but when he seemed dissatisfied with the portion of his father's kingdom that he had allotted him, and was for exciting the nobility of Armenia to renew the war against the Romans, and the Parthians to join in it, Pompey put him among those whom he reserved for his triumph, and after that triumph left him in prison. *Prideaux's Connection*, Anno 66.

(c) *Appian* in Mithrid. *Epit.* Liv. lib. ci. and *Dion Cassius*, lib. 36.

* This young prince having been hard pressed by the Romans while they lay at the siege of Sinape, and had then by their fleet the mastery of the Euxine Sea, (which lay between Sinape and the kingdom of Machares) had made a peace with them, and ever

half, that in case he might be allowed to hold his paternal kingdom (as Tigranes had been), he would pay tribute to the Romans for it, and relinquish to them all his other dominions; but when he understood that Pompey would listen to no proposals of peace, upon any other condition than that he should come and surrender himself as Tigranes had done, he could not bring himself to submit to that; and therefore, having got together a considerable number of forces out of the Scythian nations, wherewith he augmented his own army, and sent agents to engage the Gauls to join him as soon as he approached the Alps (*a*), he resolved to make a desperate expedition † through the way of Pannonia and the Tarentine Alps into Italy itself, and there assault the Romans, as Hannibal had done, at their very doors. But when the army was to go upon their march, they were so frightened at the thoughts of it, that they conspired against him, and made Pharnaces his son their king.

From Joseph.
lib. xii. c. 19.
to the end of
lib. xv.

Mithridates dreaded nothing so much as to fall into the hands of the Romans, and being led in triumph by them; and therefore, being apprehensive that his son might deliver him to Pompey, and finding no possibility of making his escape, he retired into his apartment, and having there distributed poison to his wives, his concubines, and daughters that were with him, he took a dose of it himself; but when he found it did not sufficiently operate upon him, he had recourse to his sword to finish the work, * and so died, after he had lived seventy-two years, and reigned sixty of them.

The Romans, after they had overcome all foreign powers and potentates that pretended to rival them, and thereby become masters of the greatest part of the then known world, fell soon into contests with one another about the government of it, and in every age some one appeared who, at the expence of the public peace, affected to become the sole regent of it. But the most remarkable struggles of this kind, that any

since maintained the terms of it. By this means he had much incensed his father, and dreaded his approach. While therefore he was on the way, he sent ambassadors to him to make his peace, and to urge in excuse, that what he had done in that respect was by the necessity of his affairs and not by choice: but finding his father implacable, and no possibility of making his escape, he slew himself to avoid falling into his hands. *Appian*. in *Mithrid.*

(*a*) *Plutarch*. de *Pompeio*; *Dion Cassius*, lib. xxxvii. *Appian*. in *Mithridaticis*; *Epitome Livii*, lib. cvi. and *L. Florus*, lib. iii. c. 5.

† A desperate expedition indeed, which contained a march of above two thousand miles, through all those countries which are now called Tartaria Crimæa, Podolia, Moldavia, Walachia, Transilvania, Hungaria, Stiria, Carinthia, Tyrol, and Lombardy, and over the three great rivers of the Boristhenes, the Danube, and the Po. *Prideaux's Connection*, Anno 64.

* The character which *Velleius Paterculus* gives us of this great man, is expressed in these words:—*Per ea tempora Mithridates, ponticus rex, vir neque silendus, neque dicendus sine cura? Bello acerrimus, virtute eximius, aliquando fortuna, semper animo maximus Consiliis Dux, Miles Mauus, Odio in Romanos Hannibal.* And from other historians we may learn,—That he was naturally a man of a great capacity and understanding, which he had taken much care to improve: for he was not only well skilled in all the learning of those times, but though he had two and

twenty different nations under his dominions, yet he could speak to every one of them in their own proper language. He was a prince of great undertakings; and though he failed in most of those wherein he had to do with the Romans, yet after every overthrow, we find him still rising up again with new vigour; for his last design of invading Italy sufficiently shews, that though his fortune often forsook him, yet his stout heart, his courageous spirit, and his enterprising genius, never did. After all, he was a man of great vices as well as virtues. His cruelty was shewn in the murder of his mother and his brother, and the great number of his sons, friends, and followers, whom at several times, and often on slight occasions, he put to death. His ambition was manifest by his many unjust invasions of other mens rights for the augmentation of his own dominions, and the many wicked methods of treachery, murder, and perfidiousness that he took to accomplish his end. And his lust appeared in the great number of wives and concubines he had to serve it: for in the one or other of these capacities, wherever he found an handsome woman, he always took her to him, and carried some of these with him wherever he went; but when reduced to any distress, he always poisoned those whom he could not carry off, in like manner as he did his sisters and daughters in this case, that none of them might fall into the enemy's hands. *Velleius Paterculus*, lib. ii. c. 18. *Valerius Maximus*, lib. viii. c. 7. *Appian*. in *Mithridaticis*, and *Plutarch*, in *Lucullo & Pompeio*.

A. M. 4001. way relate to the Scripture History, were between Sylla and Marius, Cæsar and Pompey, Anthony and Augustus
&c. or 5410.
Ant. Chris.

1, &c. or 1.
aut. &c.
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The occasion of the difference between Sylla and Marius was the choice of a general to the Mithridatic war. Marius (*a*), who was by birth a plebeian, and of a very mean parentage, had, by his military prowess and interest with the common people, raised himself to the chief command in the Jugurthine war, and in the war against the Teutones and Cimbri had gained himself immortal honour; but being now upwards of seventy years old, in the late confederate war he had not so well maintained his reputation: whether it was that old age rebated his activity, or fortune had not thrown occasions of signaling himself in his way. Sylla, on the contrary, a Patrician by birth, and one of the most illustrious families in Rome, was lively, active, and impetuous, had gained great battles, taken considerable towns, and through the whole course of the war so distinguished himself by his many and glorious successes, that he soon had the consulate conferred on him, and was afterwards declared governor of Asia Minor, and commander in chief in the war against Mithridates. Marius, who thought that all the preferments of the commonwealth did of right belong to him, looked upon this preference as an injustice done him, and was therefore resolved to carry by force what he had not attained by the people's choice.

To this purpose he drew over to his interest a tribune, called Publ. Sulpitius, an inveterate enemy to Sylla, and who by his power and authority among the people procured a law to pass, which took from Sylla the command of the army against Mithridates, and conferred it upon Marius. Marius accordingly sent some officers of his party to take the command of the army, until he himself could come to them; but Sylla had prevented them, and made so sure of the affections of the soldiers, that instead of obeying the orders sent from Marius, they killed his officers, and besought Sylla to lead them against his enemies at Rome, before he transported them into Asia. Incensed at the death of his officers, Marius had caused several of Sylla's friends to be put to death, and their houses to be plundered. This made Sylla hasten his march to Rome, where he soon defeated the body which Marius and Sulpitius had raised to oppose him, and entered the city sword in hand. The decree which transferred the command of the army from him to Marius he caused to be repealed, and articles of impeachment drawn up against C. Marius, young Marius his son, the tribune Sulpitius, and twelve senators who were of their party, for having been the authors of the late insurrection. Hereupon they were declared enemies to the Roman commonwealth; were interdicted water and fire, i. e. all manner of sustenance, or assistance from any body; had rewards set upon their heads, and troops on all sides detached to hunt them down.

Sulpitius in the search was apprehended by some of Sylla's soldiers, who cut off his head and carried it to Rome, and nailed it to the rostrum; but Marius had the good luck to make his escape, though † he underwent many dangers and hazards of his life during the time of his exile.

(*a*) *Vertot's* Revolutions of Rome, c. 10.

† After he was upwards of seventy years of age, and had been six times consul, he was forced to fly from Rome on foot, without either a friend or servant to accompany him; and to avoid Sylla's people that pursued him, to throw himself into a morass, where he lay the whole night, sunk and buried in mud up to the neck. In the morning when he got out, and endeavoured to gain the sea shore, in hopes of meeting some vessel to carry him out of Italy, he was known by the people of Minturnæ, seized and carried into the town with a rope about his neck, all naked and muddy. The magistrate of the place, in obedience to the

decree of the senate which had attainted him, and set a price upon his head, sent a public slave, a Cimbrian by birth, to put him to death; but as the slave approached with his naked sword, "Canst thou, thou barbarian (said he with a loud voice) have the assurance to assassinate Caius Marius?" Whereupon the slave, frightened at the sound of a name so terrible to his countrymen, threw down his sword, and ran out of the prison in great disorder, crying out, "That it was not in his power to kill Marius." The magistrates of Minturnæ, looking upon this as an interposition of heaven for the preservation of this great man, not only set him at liberty, but furnished him with a

In the mean time, Cornelius Cinna, who, though a Patrician by birth, had devoted himself to the Plebeian party, when once he was created consul, and Sylla was gone to his command in Asia, was for rescinding the decree, whereby Marius was proscribed: but when the senate perceived his design, they soon passed sentence upon him, declaring him fallen from the right of a citizen, and deprived of the dignity of a consul, and in his room they elected Lucius Merula. Cinna, who was naturally proud and fiery, upon hearing of this sentence, raised an army with purpose to revenge himself upon the authors of it, and sent to Marius to come to his assistance, who, as he passed through the cities of Italy, was joined by some veterans that had formerly served under him, and by promising freedom to all slaves that would come under his banner, had got together a good body of men. With these, and the forces that Cinna had collected, they both marched directly to Rome, where, of the two consuls, Octavius was killed on his tribunal, and Merula (to prevent the enemy from putting him to a worse death) had his veins opened; where several senators of great note were by the order of Marius murdered in the streets, their heads cut off and laid upon the rostrum, and their mangled bodies left to be devoured by dogs; and where he caused Sylla's house to be razed, his goods confiscated, his wife, children, and friends, to be proscribed, and himself to be declared an enemy to the commonwealth, even while he was adding large provinces and kingdoms to the Roman state.

From Joseph.
lib. xlii. c. 19.
to the end of
lib. xv.

In the mean time, his wife, children, and friends, who had fled to his camp for protection, were continually soliciting him to turn his arms against his private enemies, and to free his country from those tyrants who had so long oppressed it: So that having concluded a peace with Mithridates upon very advantageous terms, he passed over with his army into Italy. But before he was arrived Marius was dead of a pleurisy, occasioned by excessive drinking, to which in the decline of life he accustomed himself; and young Marius, who inherited his father's cruelty, as well as power, entered into a close league with Cinna, and engaged Valerius Flaccus (whom they procured to be made consul) in their interest and design of opposing Sylla. But Sylla, as soon as he landed in Italy, defeated Marius, and reduced him to the necessity of laying violent hands upon himself; and having vanquished all his other enemies, entered Rome at the head of his victorious forces, and there gave a loose to his licentious passion of revenge. All the poor people that had appeared against him in arms, even though they came to beg quarter, he ordered to be massacred. Fourscore senators, and six hundred knights, together with an infinite number of the richest citizens of Rome, he caused to be proscribed: their sons and grandsons he degraded from all their rights and privileges; those that should protect or harbour any of them, he threatened with the like proscription; and to those that should apprehend or murder any of them, he promised a reward of two talents; so that it became no uncommon thing for slaves that had murdered their masters, nay, for children that had murdered their fathers, to come, with their hands reeking in blood, to demand the reward of their treason or parricide.

Nor was it only the party that favoured Marius which suffered in this barbarous manner, but, as Sylla (*a*) made little or no account of any man's life, he permitted his friends and officers, with impunity, to revenge themselves of all their private enemies,

vessel, wherein he sailed first into the island of Ænaria, and thence, designing for Africa, he was forced, either by stress of weather or want of water, to go on shore upon the coast of Sicily, where he met with new dangers. For a Roman quæstor, who had the chief command there, offered to seize him; so that Marius, being forced to defend himself, lost sixteen of his men, who made a stand just upon the shore whilst others helped him on board. From Sicily he sailed to Africa, and landed at Carthage; but from thence he was

expelled by Sextilius, who, as prætor, commanded in that province, and, notwithstanding the rigour of the season, was forced to go on board, and spend a good part of the winter in his ship, wandering up and down those seas, till, being informed of what was doing at Rome by a messenger from Cinna, he returned to Italy, joined Cinna, besieged Rome, and revenged himself too severely of his enemies. *Vertot's Revolutions of Rome*, lib. 10.

(*a*) *Vertot's Revolutions of Rome*, lib. x.

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insomuch, that fresh numbers were proscribed and murdered every day, and no one (especially if he was rich and wealthy) was secure of his life for a moment: Nay, to such an excess of cruelty and arbitrariness did he proceed at last, that, without naming any particular persons, he proscribed whole cities and nations, and, by way of confiscation, seized on all the estates, houses, and territories, belonging to such towns in Italy as had declared for Marius during the civil war, which (to attach them more firmly to his interest) he took care to distribute among his soldiers.

Some, however, that were about him, and had probably been benefited by these usurpations, being apprehensive that such violent proceedings might not last long (to give them the better sanction, and some colour of law), advised him to take upon him the office, not of a temporary, but perpetual dictator. The power of this supreme magistrate was boundless. The authority of the consuls, and all other magistrates, except that of the tribunes, was superseded by it. He had the power of life and death over his fellow citizens, was sole arbiter of peace and war, was at liberty to raise or disband forces as he thought fit, and under no obligation to give an account of his conduct to any body. In a word, he had all the power of the most absolute king (greater indeed than any of the ancient kings of Rome ever had); but then it was only in the times of the greatest exigencies of the commonwealth, when it was endangered either by powerful enemies abroad, or by civil commotions at home, that such an officer was appointed; and, lest such a large power should be abused, no man was invested with it for longer than six months. But Sylla, who had terrified the people into a tame submission, and made himself absolute at Rome, would have it conferred on him for a time undetermined; so that the Romans, who had changed kingly government into the republican under consuls and military tribunes, after many ages, relapsed again into the absolute power of one; though Sylla, to lessen the aversion which all republicans could not but have to such a form of government, took care to disguise what was in reality a royalty, under the less odious title of a † dictatorship.

This success of Sylla's in climbing up to the empire, and supporting himself therein, made it apparent to those that came after him, that the Romans could bear a master, and gave occasion to the violent contests which afterwards happened between Cæsar and Pompey, who, after the death of Crassus *, and the Parthian war, were the two great competitors for the sovereignty of Rome.

† One thing is very wonderful in this Sylla, that after he had destroyed more than an hundred thousand of his fellow-citizens in the civil war, and had caused ninety senators (of which fifteen had been consuls), and more than six and twenty hundred knights to be put to death, he had the courage to lay down the dictatorship, and to reduce himself to the level of a private citizen, without fearing the resentment of so many illustrious families, whose heads he had destroyed by his cruel proscriptions. The Romans in general looked upon this his abdication of the sovereign power as an instance of the greatest magnanimity, and gladly forgave him all his murders, for the sake of the liberty which he thereby restored them; but his enemies imputed it to the natural uneasiness of his mind, and his continual fear, lest some Roman might be bold enough, at one stroke, to deprive him of his empire and his life both. However this be, it is certain, that, after having shed so much blood, he died peaceably in his bed, and a few days before his death, composed his own epitaph, which comprises his true character: viz. "That no body had ever outdone him, either in obliging his friends, or

persecuting his enemies. *Vertot's Revolutions*, lib. xi.

* When Crassus led his army into Mesopotamia, there came to him a certain chief of an Arabian tribe, who, having served in the wars under Pompey, had contracted an acquaintance with several of the Romans, and was therefore a properer instrument for Surenas, the Parthian general, to employ upon this occasion. He told Crassus, enquiring about the strength of the enemy, that they were unable to stand before him, and that, to obtain a complete victory, he had nothing to do but to march directly against them, for which purpose he offered himself to be their guide. Crassus was weak enough to accept of his offer; and, accordingly, the crafty man led them along the plains of Mesopotamia, until he had brought them into a sandy desert, where the Parthians, he knew, would have the best opportunity of destroying them, and then rode off to acquaint Surenas with it, who immediately fell upon them and gave them a terrible defeat. Nor was this the only false step that Crassus made; for having rested the remains of his army for one day at Carrhæ, not far from the place where the battle was fought, when, in the night following, he

Cneius Pompeius (whose father being of the same name, had been consul, and served his country faithfully in the wars) was, from his very youth, the darling of the Roman people; created a general before he had been a soldier; and through the whole course of his life attended with a wonderful train of victories and successes: (a) But being all along accustomed to the command of armies, he could not so well, upon the expiration of his commission, reduce himself to the simplicity of a private life; and therefore, whenever he appeared in public, he was always followed by a crowd of his dependants, whose numerous appearance looked more like the court of some great prince than the attendants of a citizen of any republic. It must be owned, however, that in his pursuit of dignities, he was less fond of the power that is inseparable from them, than of the honours and splendours that surround them; that, in short, he was a man of show rather than real ambition; and, if he affected any high offices in state, it was chiefly to raise himself above all the commanders of his time; for the great pride of his soul was to be thought the only general of the commonwealth, whereas he should have contented himself with being the first.

From Joseph.
lib. xiii. c. 19.
to the end of
lib. xv.

(b) Caius Julius Cæsar was born of the illustrious family of the Julii, and was indeed the most extraordinary person of his age. Nature, which seemed to have formed him for the command of the rest of mankind, had given him an air of empire, and a dignity of aspect inexpressible; but then this air of grandeur was allayed by the gentleness and sweetness of his behaviour, which gained him the hearts of those he conversed with, and laid the foundation of his future greatness. He was a man of exalted courage and insinuating eloquence, extensive in his designs, indefatigable in pursuing them, and ambitious of the great offices of state, chiefly for the increase of his interest and power, and for the means and opportunity which they afforded him, by gentle degrees, of becoming the master and sovereign of his country. [He was likewise a man of science and learning.]

Upon the death of Crassus, who held the balance between these two great men, the emulation between them began to break out. Cæsar was in Gaul pursuing his victories against the Helvetians, the Germans, the Belgæ, the Britons, and several other nations, and astonishing all the world with the fame of his great exploits; but Pompey, since the time of his victories in Asia, had continued (now for the space of twelve years) for the most part in Rome, notwithstanding he had obtained a large commission to govern the provinces of Spain and Africa.

By his constant residing at Rome he had got a perfect ascendant over the senate; and some, to remedy the disorders they then laboured under, were for creating him dictator, till Cato, who was always watchful for the public liberty, proposed rather to chuse him sole consul without a colleague; because a consul was responsible to the people and senate for his conduct, which a dictator was not.

The senate approved of this expedient, and accordingly made Pompey the sole consul. They continued him likewise in his former governments; and for the payment of the forces he had under him, gave him an annual allowance of a thousand talents out of the exchequer: But as all good understanding between him and Cæsar was now vanished, he took care to prefer two laws, which the senate readily agreed to, viz. "That the miscarriages of officers for twenty years last past should be enquired into; and that all absent persons should not be allowed to demand any public employments;" the latter of which was more immediately levelled at Cæsar: For Pompey's design herein was to oblige him to abandon the government of the two Gauls and the com-

endeavoured to make his escape, he committed himself to the guidance of one Andromachus, another traitor, who led him into the midst of bogs and morasses, where Surenas overtook him, slew him, and gave his army the greatest overthrow that the Romans had ever received since the battle of Cannæ;

for, in this engagement, twenty thousand were slain, and ten thousand taken prisoners; and the rest forced to make their escape by several ways into Armenia, Cilicia, and Syria. *Plutarch*, in *Crasso*. *Appian*, in *Parthicus*, and *Dion Cassius*, lib. xl.

(a) *Vertot's* *Revolutions*, lib. xiii. (b) *Ibid.*

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mand of his army, in order to come in person to solicit the consulate which he in his turn (as he signified by his letters) expected to have conferred on him.

Cæsar was very well aware of Pompey's design; but instead of relinquishing his government and returning to Rome, he chose to remain at the head of his forces; and when the senate (by Pompey's procurement) came to a resolution of taking the government from him by naming his successor, he wrote several letters to them with a great deal of temper, requesting either that they would continue him in his government as they had done Pompey, or permit him, though absent from Rome, to put up for the consulate; but the majority of the senate, that was entirely under Pompey's direction, rejected every proposal that he sent; so that finding himself treated with contempt, he passed the Alps at the head of the third legion, and halted at Ravenna, from whence he sent Fabius, one of his lieutenants, with letters to the senate, (a) "wherein he magnified his own exploits, expecting that some regard should be had to his services; and wherein he declared his readiness to lay down his command in case Pompey would do the like; but that if that general pretended to retain his forces, he knew very well how to defend himself at the head of his legions, and would, in a few days, be at Rome to revenge the injuries which were done to him as well as the public."

This letter, when read to the senate, was represented as a kind of declaration of war, and accordingly procured a "decree, that Lucius Domitius should be Cæsar's successor, and have four thousand new levies to enable him to go and take possession of his government; and that in case Cæsar refused to disband his army within such a time, he should be prosecuted as an enemy to the commonwealth." When Cæsar was informed of this decree, he sent orders to such of his troops as were nearest at hand, to advance towards the Rubicon, a small river that parted his government of Gallia Cisalpina from the rest of Italy. When he came up the next day, he found there five thousand foot and three hundred horse; and having halted a while on the bank of the river, he is said there to have been seized with some remorse upon consideration of what he was about to do; till, having reflected on the hatred and inveteracy of his enemies, he threw himself into the river at once, passed it, and took Ariminum by surprise; and from thence put all Rome in such a disorder, that Pompey, not having sufficient forces to resist him, with the consuls and a great number of senators, retired to Capua, and thence to Brundisium, where taking shipping, they soon arrived at the port of Dyrrachium, a city of Epirus, where Pompey intended to gather together such an army as might enable him to make a stand.

Upon the retreat of Pompey, Cæsar, in the space of sixty days, made himself master of all Italy, and came to Rome, where he promised the people every thing should be done for the good of the commonwealth: And having filled up the senate, and settled some kind of government among them, he marched his army directly into Spain, where Pompey was governor, and had left several troops attached to his interest. As soon as he came thither he fell upon Afranius and Petreius, Pompey's lieutenants; and having driven them out of the province, he made himself master thereof, and so returned to Rome, where he was declared dictator, though, after eleven days, he laid down that office, and, together with Servilius Isauricus, was elected consul for the year ensuing.

Pompey, by this time, had been in Epirus for the space of a year, and had got together a considerable army out of Greece, Asia, and all the eastern countries, to support his interest; but when Cæsar went after him, the season of the year was too far advanced, either for the fleets to be at sea, or the armies to take the field, and so both sides lay still in their winter quarters.

In the spring both armies took the field, and encamped against each other near Dyrrachium (now Durazzo), where, in several skirmishes, Cæsar had the better; but at

(a) *Vertot's Revolutions*, lib. xiii.

length, in one of them he received so great a defeat, that himself acknowledged he must have been utterly undone, had Pompey seen his advantage and pursued it. For fear of the like disaster, therefore, or the want of provisions for his army, Cæsar decamped the next day, and marched towards Thessaly, where he found plenty of all things, and there waited to give Pompey battle. Pompey had an army of forty-five thousand foot and five thousand horse; but they were most of them raw unexperienced men, raised out of the effeminate nations of Asia, and some Roman senators and other gentlemen, who knew very little of war. Cæsar, on the other hand, had an army of twenty-two thousand foot and one thousand horse; but then they were most part of them veteran soldiers, who, for the space of ten years, had been accustomed to war and victory in Gaul. On the plains of Pharsalia these two armies met, with two of the greatest generals in the world at the head of them, disputing for universal empire. The engagement for some time was sharp on both sides: But at length Pompey's army was vanquished and broken; fifteen thousand of them were slain; four and twenty thousand made prisoners; their camp was taken, and their general, with much ado, forced to make his escape in disguise, and after having wandered from place to place, was at length in Egypt * perfidiously slain, in the fifty-ninth year of his age.

From Joseph.
lib. xiii. c. 19
to the end of
lib. xv.

After the death of Pompey and the return of Cæsar to Rome, the senate decreed him uncommon honours, and an unlimited authority. He was appointed consul for ten years, and perpetual dictator; had the name of *Imperator* given him, and the august title of *Father of his Country*. His person was declared sacred and inviolable; and at all public games he had the privilege of sitting in a gilded chair, with a golden crown upon his head; but notwithstanding all this profusion of honours, we find in what a barbarous manner he was murdered at last, [when he was forming the grandest plans for the improvement of his country and the world.]

After the death of Julius Cæsar, great confusion and disorders happened in the Roman state, till at length Anthony and Octavianus, upon the forced abdication of Lepidus, became the two great men in the empire. Anthony had all the east and Octavianus all the west; but not content with this, they soon took occasion to differ with each other, and entered into contest who should have the whole.

Anthony was a person of great note for his military skill and abilities. At the battle of Pharsalia he did wonders; and in that of Philippi, where Octavianus *² behaved but

* After the defeat of his army, Pompey, not well knowing which way to betake himself, determined at last to go to Egypt. He had been a very considerable friend to the late king Ptolemy Auletes, and therefore he expected a kind reception from his son. Taking therefore his wife Cornelia, and his younger son Sextus with him, he steered his course towards Egypt, and as he drew near to land, sent messengers to the king, desiring his protection and aid in his present distress. The king was then a minor, under the tuition of Pothynus an eunuch, and Achilles the general of his army, who, taking Theodotus and some others into the consultation, advised together what answer to send. Some were for receiving and others for rejecting him; but Theodotus was of opinion that their only safe way was to dispatch him: For should they receive him, as he argued, Cæsar would revenge it; should they reject him, if ever he recovered power, himself would revenge it; and therefore the only method to secure themselves from both was to cut him off: For hereby they would certainly make Cæsar their friend, and prevent the other from doing any mischief; for dead men (said he, according to the

proverb) never bite. This advice prevailed; and accordingly Achilles, with Septimus, a Roman commander then in the service of the king of Egypt, was sent to put it in execution. Under the pretence therefore of conducting Pompey to the king, they took him out of the ship into a boat; but as soon as they came near the shore, they fell upon him and slew him, cut off his head, and cast his dead carcase on the strand. His wife and son, seeing this barbarous murder, raised bitter cries and lamentations; but all to no purpose: Perceiving therefore themselves in the like danger, they hoisted sail, and made off, leaving this great man (who in the fifty-ninth year of his age came to this woeful end) no other funeral than what Philip, an enfranchised bondman of his, and a poor Roman, who came thither by accident, could give him, by making a funeral pile of the broken pieces of an old boat that lay wrecked on the shore. *Plutarch*, in *Pompeio*, and *Appian*. de *Bellis Civilibus*, lib. ii.

*² On the eve before the battle at Philippi, under pretence of some indisposition, he left the body which he commanded, and, while the two armies were engaged, hid himself amongst the baggage; and, in a

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very meanly, the whole victory was owing to his courage and conduct : But he was exceedingly addicted to vice, especially to the love of women, which Cleopatra observing, laid hold of him on this weak side, and, for the gratification of her ambition and avarice (which were the two predominant passions in her), put him upon such measures as gave a general offence to the Romans.

Octavianus, on the other hand, though he was always successful, yet for this he was indebted not so much to his courage as his cunning and management ; for though he had a genius capable of framing the greatest projects, yet, in cool blood, he found himself incapable of facing the meanest danger. And therefore being conscious of his weakness in this respect, he contented himself with supplying the schemes, and called in the valour of other men to put them in execution. In most of his military undertakings he borrowed, as it were, Agrippa's courage, and the rather made use of him because he was a mere soldier of fortune, and consequently incapable of creating any jealousy, or making himself head of any party.

After * a vast preparation for war, these two great men, of different characters, met with their armies and fleets near Actium, a town on the coast of Epirus, there to decide the empire of the world. Canidius, who had the chief command of Anthony's army, persuaded him to decamp, and march into the country of Thrace, or Macedon, there to try his fortune in a battle at land, because his army was much more to be depended on than his fleet : but Cleopatra, who was then in company with Anthony, advised him rather to decide the matter by a fight at sea, and her advice prevailed.

On the second of September, therefore, A. M. 3973. (5380) Ant. Christ. 31. the two fleets engaged before the mouth of the Ambrasian gulph, in the sight of the two armies, the one drawn up on the north and the other on the south side of the straits which entered the gulph, there to attend the event of the battle. The fight, for some time, continued dubious, with as fair a prospect of success for Anthony as for his adversary, until Cleopatra forsook him : for she, being affrightened with the noise and terror of the battle, gave orders to the captain that commanded her ship to shear off, and so drew after her the whole Egyptian squadron, which consisted of sixty large men of war.

Anthony, giving all for lost, made after her as fast as he could, and so by his flight yielded the victory to Octavianus ; but, after he was gone, his ships fought so valiantly, that though the engagement began at noon it was not ended till it was night.

In the mean time Anthony and Cleopatra got to Teneros in Laconia, whither some of his ships, that had escaped the fight, and several of his friends, repaired to him, from whom he understood, that though his fleet was destroyed, his land-army was still safe ; and therefore he wrote to Canidius to retire with it through Macedonia into Asia, in hopes of being able by that means to renew the war : but Canidius in his march being overtaken by Octavianus, fled by night to Anthony, and the army finding themselves deserted by their generals went over to the enemy, as the foreign forces, which had come to the assistance of Anthony, fled all home to their respective countries, and made their peace afterwards with the conqueror on the best terms they could.

By this time Anthony and Cleopatra were both returned to Alexandria ; and it was not long before Octavianus went in pursuit of them. On their first coming, Anthony fell upon the Roman troops, while under the fatigue of their march, and put them to a

sea-fight against young Pompey, he had not the courage to see the two fleets engage, but lay in the bottom of the ship, with his eyes lift up to heaven as if he had been in a trance, and never once shewed himself to his soldiers, until news was brought him that the enemy was fled. *Vertot's Revolutions of Rome*, lib. xiv.

* Anthony's forces, at land and sea, consisted of an hundred thousand foot, twelve thousand horse, and five hundred ships of war ; and Octavianus's of eighty thousand foot, twelve thousand horse, and two hundred and fifty ships of war. *Plutarch* in Antonis, and *Dion Cassius*, lib. lxxx.

total rout; but, in a second engagement with them, he was vanquished, and driven back into the city with great loss. The next morning, when he went down to the harbour to put the fleet in order to engage the enemy, no sooner were they drawn up in line of battle, but he saw them desert and go over to them, and (to his greater mortification) when he returned into the city, he found that all the land forces, both horse and foot, had in like manner revolted from him.

When Anthony understood that all this was done by Cleopatra's treachery, and in hopes of making her peace with Octavianus, he could not forbear expressing his resentment of it in loud complaints; so that Cleopatra, for fear of him, but (as she pretended) to secure herself from the enemy, fled to a monument, which she caused to be built of a great height and wonderful structure, and having there shut herself up with two maids and one eunuch, she had given it out that she was dead. Anthony no sooner heard the news, but, supposing it to be true, he fell upon his sword; however, having intelligence, some time after, that Cleopatra was still alive, he ordered those about him to carry him to her monument, where might be seen one of the most deplorable spectacles that can be imagined. Anthony, all over bloody, and breathing out his last, was, by the hands of Cleopatra and her two maids, drawn up by the ropes and pulleys that were employed in the building, to the top of the monument, and there, in a few moments, expired in her arms.

After the death of Anthony, the great care of Octavianus was to make himself master of Cleopatra's person and riches; of her person, to adorn his triumph, and of her riches, to defray the expences of the war: But after he had luckily compassed both, she, having private notice given her of her being designed to be carried to Rome, to make part of the show in her conqueror's triumph, caused herself * to be bitten with an asp, and so, to avoid this infamy, *² died, after she had reigned, from the death of her father, twenty-two years, and lived thirty-nine.

Octavianus, (a) though much concerned for having thus lost the chief glory of his triumph, did nevertheless make for Cleopatra (as he had permitted her to make for Anthony) a splendid and royal funeral. He had them both repositied in the same monument which they had begun, and gave orders to have it finished. Having thus settled his affairs in Egypt, and cut off all those from whom he might expect any fresh disturbances, he made a review of the several provinces of the Lesser Asia and the isles adjoining, and so passing through Greece returned to Rome, where he triumphed for three days successively, for his victories over the Dalmatians, and for the sea-fight at Actium, and for the conquest of Egypt; in the last of which were led before him the children of Cleopatra; and though herself had escaped that fate, her effigy was carried in procession, with an asp hanging at her arm to denote the manner of her death.

After this triumph he held a private consultation with Agrippa and Mecænas (his two chief ministers, and principal instruments of his greatness), whether he should re-

From Joseph.
lib. xiii. c. 19.
to the end of
lib. xv.

* The asp is a serpent of Egypt and Libya, and proper only to those climates. Those that are bitten by it die within three hours, in a kind of gentle sleep or lethargy, without any sensation of pain; and therefore Cleopatra, who had experienced all kinds of poisons upon other creatures, made choice of this as the easiest way of dying; and, to deceive her keepers, kept an asp always hid in her chamber under figs, grapes, and flowers, which, when she was determined to die, she took and held to her arm, and soon after its biting her fell into a sleep, and so died.

Ausa et jacentem visere regiam
Vultu sereno fortis, et asperas
Traetare serpentes, ut atrum
Corpore combiberet venenum.

Deliberatâ morte ferocior:
Sævis liburnis scilicet invidens,
Privata deduci superbo
Non humilis mulier triumpho.

Hor. Carm. lib. i. Ode xxxvii.

*² In her death ended the reign of the family of the Ptolemies in Egypt, which hereupon was reduced into the form of a Roman province, and was governed by a prefect sent thither from Rome. Under this form it continued a province of the Roman empire six hundred and seventy years, till it was taken from them by the Saracens, in the year of our Lord 641. *Pri-
deaux's Connection*, Anno 30.

(a) *Dion, Cassius*, lib. ii. and *Suetonius*, in Octavio.

A. M. 4001,
&c. or 5410,
Ant. Chris.
1, &c. or 1.
aut Ær.
Vulg. 3.

store the commonwealth to its ancient state, or retain the sovereign power. Agrippa was for the restoring, but Mecænas for the retaining part: whereupon Octavianus, knowing that the senate was filled with his creatures, whose fortunes depended on his holding the sovereignty, proposed indeed, in a formal speech, to resign his authority; but no sooner was the proposal made, than the whole senate, with an unanimous voice, dissuaded him from it, and, with all manner of arguments, pressed him to take upon him the sole administration of the government; which, with much seeming reluctance, at length he consented to. But by no means would he submit to accept of it for a longer term than ten years, though, from ten years to ten years, upon one pretence or other, he continued himself in it as long as he lived, and so transmitted it to his successors.

With this new power the senate was determined to confer on him a new name. Himself had taken upon him the common title of emperor, which the soldiers, during the times of the republic, used to give to victorious generals; but this was not thought adequate to his merit: And therefore, since the word Augustus seemed to signify something that above human was sacred and venerable, this was made choice of, and, by the general suffrage of the senate, first given to him, with many more things decreed in his honour, by the flattery of some who courted his favour, and the fear of others who dreaded his power.

Augustus (for so we must now call him) having raised himself to this height of power and glory, as soon as Lepidus *, who had been Pontifex Maximus, or high priest of Rome, was dead, assumed to himself (as did his successors in the empire) that office; and the first thing he did was to examine into the prophetic books, which, at that time, went abroad under the name of the Sibyls †.

That in the reign of Tarquinius Superbus there came a strange woman to Rome, who offered to sell to the king nine volumes of these Sibylline oracles; but upon his refusing to purchase them, burnt three of them, and afterwards coming with six, and being rejected, burnt three more, and yet at last obtained the full price of what she had asked at first for the three remaining; that these volumes when purchased (a) were laid up

* This Lepidus was one of the triumvirate with Octavianus and Anthony, but a man of no manner of merit. He joined Octavianus in carrying on the war against Sextus Pompeius, the son of Pompey the Great; but when he arrogated the whole honour of their successes to himself, Octavianus drew over all his army to desert him, and so reduced him to the necessity of begging his life, and of being content to lead the remainder of it in a private and mean condition at Circetii, a small maritime town among the Latins, where he was sent into banishment, and there died in obscurity and contempt. *Suetonius*, in Octavio, lib. xvi. *Appian*, de Bellis Civilibus, lib. v. and *L. Florus*, lib. iv. c. 8.

† The Sibyls were women, of ancient times said to be endued with a prophetic spirit, and to have delivered oracles, foreshewing the fates and destinies of kingdoms. We have in the writings of the ancients mention made of ten of them. The Cumæan, the Cumanian, the Persian, the Hellespontican, the Lybian, the Samian, the Delphian, the Phrygian, the Tiburtine, and the Erythræan; but some are of opinion, that the Cumæan and the Erythræan was one and the same Sibyl; that she was born at Erythræ in Ionia, and therefore was by the Greeks called Erythræa; but having removed from Erythræ to Cumæ in Italy, and there delivered all her oracles, she was from thence, by the Romans and Italians, called Cu-

mæa. These Sibyls, among the Pagans, were accounted what the prophets and prophetesses were really among the Hebrews; and as the most ancient of these was named Sibylla, so all others of the same sex, who pretended to the like fatidical spirit, were called Sibyls. The place from whence these Sibyls gave out their oracles was generally a cave, or subterraneous vault (if we may judge of others by that at Cumæ), whereof Justin Martyr gives us this account. "I have seen the place, says he, which is a large chapel, or oratory, hewn out of the main rock, and must have been a work of great labour. Here the Sibyl (as the inhabitants, who had a tradition thereof, told me) gave forth oracles. In the middle of the chapel they shewed me three hollow places hewn out of the same rock, in which, when filled with water, the Sibyl used to bathe herself, and so having put on her garment, retired into the innermost cell of the chapel, (which was likewise hewn out of the same rock) and having placed herself upon an elevated seat, which jutted out into the middle of the cell, she there uttered her oracles." *Lactantius*, de falsa Religione, lib. i. c. 6. *Salmasius*, in Exercitatione ad Solinum, page 8. and *J. Martyr*, Cohortatio ad Græcos.

(a) *Dionys. Halicar.* lib. iv. *Pliny's Nat. Hist.* lib. xiii. *Solin. Polyhist.* lib. ii. and *Aul. Gel.* lib. i. c. 19.

in the capitol, committed to the custody of proper officers, never consulted but upon great exigencies of state, and carefully preserved until, at the burning of the capitol, in the civil wars between Sylla and Marius, they happened to be consumed; that upon the rebuilding of the capitol, (a) the Romans with great care made another collection of Sibylline oracles from several countries, and after they had selected such as their church and state did approve of for their purpose, laid them up in the new capitol, instead of those which the fire had consumed; that besides these capitoline volumes there were a great many more Sibylline oracles in the world, (b) which Augustus, in the beginning of his office of Pontifex Maximus, endeavoured to collect; and what he reputed genuine, or rather what suited his purpose best, these he deposited likewise in the capitol, burning the rest; that (c) Tiberius made another review of these oracles, and condemned several volumes of them to the flames, but the capitoline copies were still held in great veneration, (d) until they fell into disgrace in the reign of Honorius, and by his order and appointment were burnt and destroyed. (e) These are facts that are confirmed by all antiquity, and what comprise indeed the whole history of these Sibylline writings. But if they were all thus finally destroyed, the question is, how came we by the present collection of Greek verses, comprised in eight books, which go under the name of the Sibyls, and of what merit and authority are we to account them?

From Joseph.
lib. xiii. c. 19
to the end of
lib. xv.

Now, in answer to this, it is to be observed, (f) that long before the times of Christianity, there were extant among the heathens several oracles, or predictions of future events, ascribed to one or more of these prophetesses who were styled Sibyls; that these predictions were held in great esteem among the ancients, as containing notions consonant to true religion, the worship of one God, the conflagration of the world, the renovation of it again, the general resurrection, and the rewards and punishments hereafter; and that both Heathen, Jewish, and Christian authors, who make mention of these Sibyls, give a strong sanction to their authority. Varro looks upon them as inspired prophetesses; Virgil does them honour in citing their predictions; Josephus thinks them useful to establish some positions in Sacred History; and Clemens Alexandrinus (as he quotes a more ancient author for it) brings in St Paul addressing himself to an heathen audience in these words;—Take the Greek books in your hands, read the Sibyls, and see what they say of the unity of God, and how they foretel what is to come, and you will there clearly find the Son of God.—It must be acknowledged indeed, that the whole collection of these Sibylline oracles, as they are now extant in eight entire books, is far from being genuine. The 1st, 2d, and most of the 5th, all the 6th, 7th, and 8th books, seem to be a manifest forgery, the spurious production of some zealous Christian (perhaps about the middle of the second age after Christ) for the promotion of the religion he professed.

(g) In one place, he explicitly declares himself to be a Christian, and speaks of the whole mystery of our salvation, and of the methods whereby it was accomplished; of the incarnation and birth, the circumcision and death, the resurrection and ascension of our Saviour Christ, with as much accuracy as do the Evangelists. (h) In another place, he mentions Christ's future reigning here upon earth, according to the notion of the Millenarians, which was not started till the second century; and (i) in another, gives us a succession of the Roman emperors in their orders, from Julius Cæsar to Antoninus Pius, together with the adoption of Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus, which has much more the air of an historical narrative than a prophetic prediction.

These things discover a forgery (of at least a great part of these pretended oracles)

(a) Tully, de Divinat. lib. i. Dionys. Halicar. and Aul. Gel. ubi supra. (b) Lactan. de falsa Religione, lib. vi. et de Ira Dei. c. 22. (c) Sueton. in Octavio. (d) Dion Cassius, lib. lvii Tacit. Annal. lib. vi. (e) Aug. de Civit. Dei, lib. xviii. c. 53, 54. (f) Whiston's Vindication of the Sibylline Oracles. (g) Lib. viii. (h) Lib. ii. (i) Lib. v.

A. M. 4001,
&c. or 5410.
Ant. Chris.
1, &c. or 1.
aut Jer.
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a little too palpably ; but then it must be observed, that neither the heathens before, nor the Christians for the three first centuries after Christ, knew any thing of these spurious pieces, because we no where find them making any citations from them ; but now, (a) from the whole proem, the greatest part of the third, all the fourth, and a small branch of the fifth book, (which are the only parts of the present collection that are either cited or referred to by the ancient heathens), their quotations are innumerable : And therefore we may justly infer, that the present copy of eight books is not the same with what was extant before and in the first ages of Christianity, but widely different from it ; that those are the genuine prophecies only which we find the ancient heathens and primitive Christians so frequently citing, and so generally esteeming, upon the account of their Divine inspiration ; and that the rest, which have visible marks of forgery upon them, were probably the spurious additions of such conceited Christians as called themselves Gnostics ; because Epiphanius tells us, that this set of men boasted of having books written by the daughter of Noah, even as the pretended prophetess, at the end of the third book, (which is a spurious addition to what went before), gives us to know, that “ she was a wife to one of the three sons of Noah, and was with him in the ark during the whole time of the deluge.”

Upon the whole therefore we may conclude, that though in the collection which we now have of the Sibylline prophecies, several whole books, and some parts of others, are confessedly spurious ; yet others there are which have all the evidences we can desire of their being genuine : And therefore to condemn them all in the lump, and because some appear to be palpable forgeries, to include all under the same category, is an act of great injustice.

If indeed we attend never so little to the contents of those oracles which we deem genuine, we cannot but perceive, that neither heathens, Jews, nor Christians could, consistently with themselves, be any ways the forgers of them. (b) The heathens could not, because they are directly levelled against their wickedness, idolatry, and polytheism. The Jews could not, because they foretel the subversion of their state and temple by the Romans, which we all know they would never believe : And the Christians could not, because many quotations out of these oracles are found in other authors previous to Christianity ; and in the beginning of it several of them are cited by the first Christians, in the open view of all men, as very ancient at that time, very well known, and universally received over all the heathen world.

If then these genuine prophecies of the Sibyls were not of human contrivance and invention, the conclusive question is, from whence was it that they derived their original ? God, no doubt, who forced Balaam, contrary to his will, to bless the Israelites, and to prophecy (c) “ the coming of his Son out of Jacob,” could, in what manner he pleased, control the diabolical spirits which presided in the heathen oracles, and make them utter things even relating to the kingdom of the Messias, which otherwise they might have no inclination to utter. But there is no necessity for our having recourse to this extraordinary expedient ; since the contents of the Sibylline oracles (those I mean that are genuine) are every where agreeable to the Scriptures, and foretel, for the main part, the same great revolutions of Providence that they do : It is no way inconsistent with the Divine attributes to suppose, that though God gave positive laws, or an institution of religious worship to the Jews only, and entrusted none but them with those Divine oracles which related to that worship ; yet he might not wholly confine Divine inspiration to that nation, but might support the law and religion of Nature, and the right worship of himself, as the one true God, among the heathens likewise, by the help of these oracles, until (d) “ the day dawned,” i. e. a

(a) Lib. v.
(d) 2 Cor. iv. 6.

(b) *Whiston's Vindication of the Sibylline Oracles.*

(c) Numb. xxiv. 5, &c.

more perfect revelation came, and “ he who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, gave the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of JESUS CHRIST *.”

From Joseph.
lib. xiii. c. 19.
to the end of
lib. xv.

* [The most rational and consistent account of the Sibylline oracles, that is perhaps anywhere to be found within a small compass, is given by Bishop Horsley in his ingenious *Dissertation on the prophecies of the Messiah dispersed among the Heathen*. In that dissertation there are one or two positions strenuously maintained, which I cannot admit; but the general principle on which the reasoning rests as its foundation, no reflecting Christian can, I think, call in question. It is, that the rise and progress of idolatry were partial and gradual; that all nations did not become idolaters at the same period of time; that the first idolaters nowhere abjured the worship of the true God, when they began to worship subordinate deities in conjunction with him; and that they carefully collected and religiously preserved the prophecies of the patriarchal ages, until they degenerated so far as to forget the worship of the true God entirely. Even then they would not destroy the sacred books of their more orthodox and pious ancestors, but would rather add to them other predictions or pretended predictions derived from an impure source;—for, as he justly observes, superstition has uniformly been in its own nature timid, and more likely to give credit to false predictions than to destroy the books which contain predictions that are true. He supposes therefore that the Sybils were fictitious beings who never really existed; but that the oracles attributed to them were collections of true

and false prophecies—of prophecies which had really been delivered under the influence of the Spirit of God to the patriarchs of the human race, and of false prophecies which had been added to these by the heathen priests and soothsayers, to whom were committed the original sacred oracles. Such a mixture of truth and imposture he supposes to have constituted the matter of the Sybilline books which were preserved in the capitol of Rome; which the early fathers of the Christian church, such as *Justin Martyr* and *Clemens Alexandrinus* quoted; and which furnished *Virgil* with the ideas which run through his sublime eclogue entitled *Pollio*. Four-fifths of the oracles quoted from these books by the latter fathers, after *pious frauds* became frequent, he justly considers as palpable forgeries by some indiscrete Christians, who absurdly hoped to serve their cause by means calculated to injure it among thinking men. It is not, I confess, clear to me that *Virgil* took his ideas from the Sybilline books, though he quotes them, or rather refers to them; for the Old Testament, having long before been translated into Greek, was accessible to *Virgil*, who was himself a learned man of great curiosity; though, wishing to pay a compliment to a great man of Rome, he might not choose to rest the foundation of that compliment upon the sacred books of a people so generally hated and despised as were the Jews by the Romans.]

THE END OF VOLUME SECOND.

